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May 2013

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**Occupying Memory:
Rhetorical Studies for the 99%**

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**Occupying Memory:
Rhetorical Studies for the 99%**

by

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Austin
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

**The University of Texas at Austin
May 2013**

*For my Family and Friends
You are Amazing*

Acknowledgements

One contention of “Occupying Memory” is that no one can achieve success (or exist as who one is) without one’s relationships to others, so it is fitting I have the opportunity to thank all those who were most integral to making this project a reality before I offer up a single argument. I have had so many friends and mentors along the way, thus it is impossible to mention them all, but I know that I would not be anywhere without them. You are all forever in my memory, which is to say, you have made me who I am. And many of you have literally saved my life.

I want to begin by thanking the members of my family, especially my parents Cindi and Ron, for taking care of me in an incalculable way and for putting up with my academic prattle long before I became an academic. They made me who I am today, and I would not exist in the world without them. I also want to thank my sister Erin and my brother Trent. Erin has the peculiar fate of being my “twin” as it seems we move with/through Life according to a similar wavelength. And Trent not only shared a room with me for years, but has a capacity for argument and thought for which I have yet to find an equal, and who I believe indirectly imbued me with the rhetorical endurance to argue across a book-length project. I should thank my extended family as well, including my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. I miss the holidays, Sundays, sporting events, and everything else that I so rarely have the opportunity for these days due to time and distance.

Turning my sights from my biological family to my academic one, I want to thank first and foremost, Diane Davis, who revitalized my career by taking a chance on me when it seemed no one else would. Diane not only worked through all of “Occupying Memory” before anyone else, but she pushed me to keep writing until I found the inspiration that was captured in this project. My professional success in the field of rhetorical studies is, in every way, indebted to her. I am also indebted to the other members of my dissertation committee including: Jeff Walker, Peg Syverson, Josh Gunn, and Victor Vitanza. Their critical insights helped to give my project a scholarly bite that would not have been possible otherwise, and their role as mentors has been invaluable, especially as I was transitioning from one academic discipline to another. I also want to thank my future academic family at Christopher Newport University for taking a chance on me as well. I am nothing but excited for what the future holds!

Beyond my academic mentors, I should likewise thank my colleagues at the University of Texas at Austin and beyond. Thanks to Moti Gorin, Eric Detweiler, Sarah Frank, Audra Roach, Andrew Rechnitz, Jerry Green, Rachel Romero, Matt Morris, and Emily Wachsmann for talking shop and solving the world’s philosophical problems with me, especially when this involved tossing back a cold one or two. And many thanks to my colleagues in the Digital Writing and Research Lab (DWRL), who introduced me to a completely new series of questions and problems, and helped me to rethink my pedagogy. Special thanks go to Stephanie Stickney for her guidance as DWRL coordinator and her solidarity as an Occupier, Hampton Finger for fixing everything I ever broke, and Sean McCarthy, Will Burdette, Scott Nelson, Megan Gianfagna, Cate

Blouke, and Marge Foley for helping me to keep the DWRL ship afloat. I also consider as colleagues my students, who need a big thank you for helping me think through this project while it was in its infancy, especially those who took my course “Rhetoric, Memory, Forgetting.” You did a fantastic job!

Last but not least, I want to thank my fellow Occupy activists. Thank you for giving me hope and showing me the importance of solidarity and direct action. Special thanks especially to those who reached out to me at Occupy Austin like Dave Cortez, Joel Hutto, and Amanda Michelle, and the student and faculty participants from Occupy UT-Austin, including: Teri Adams, Paul DuMond, Charles Gentry, Bianca Hinz-Foley, Zach Guernero, Josh Madere, Jonathon Orta, Adrian Orozco, Amy Rattananinad, Snehal Shingavi, Lucian Villansenor, Michelle Uchi, and Sara Yamada. Your dedication to socio-political and economic justice is inspiring! Likewise, I want to give a shout-out to everyone who ever told me that my work with Occupy inspired them. Taking a stand for something is not always well-received, but your kind words of encouragement kept me attending events, carrying signs, sharing information, and writing furiously.

And to everyone who I have *forgotten*, please know how amazing you are.

Occupying Memory:
Rhetorical Studies for the 99%

Trevor Lee Hoag, Ph.D.
The University of Texas at Austin, 2013

Supervisor: Diane Davis

“Occupying Memory: Rhetorical Studies for the 99%” revitalizes rhetorical memory by emphasizing memory’s rhetorical production and non-declinable relationship to forgetting, the persuasive force of local genealogy, and the capacity of memory to spur invention and civic intervention. “Occupying Memory” performs its revival of memory through theorization of the contemporary Occupy Movement.

The first chapter, “Becoming Activist,” argues that memories are rhetorically produced, and supports this supposition by analyzing various activist practices, icons, and experiences. I consider the discursive production of memory through Occupy’s practice of the “human microphone,” and the imagistic production of memory through images such as the Guy Fawkes Mask. I also consider forgetting in the production of memory, and analyze how subjects are compelled to action through “forgotten” affects and traumas that drive one to compose self-narratives.

“Giving an Account of One’s Wealth,” strives to develop a strategy for teaching writing called “*im*-personal writing,” and employs Percentile Narratives from the Occupy Movement throughout its implementation. I analyze existing narratives from multiple

theoretical perspectives, and focus on how students can consider the rhetorical production of their memories while avoiding the pitfalls associated with “personal writing” such as the quest for authenticity.

“The Infinite Archive,” considers how the binary opposition between so-called “live” and “technological” memory deconstructs, and avers that the digitization of memory is an instance of “hyper-extension” rather than “externalization.” I consider multiple cases of such extension in the form of social media archives including Twitter, live streaming video, and viral memes. The problem of digital forgetting and networked multitudes is likewise engaged.

“Stiller than Still” contends that (singular) bodies and specific living structures can function as monuments oriented toward the future. I argue that the type of memory such monuments produce is a “common” rather than “public” memory, one that entails resistance to state control, participatory democracy, and the preservation of difference. I also consider the nature of “common” forgetting in relation to affirmation.

The text culminates with “Beginning(s),” as I consider how rhetorical memory and the Occupy Movement open onto the future, as well as the relation between memory, social movements, nostalgia, and hope.

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Don't you remember when you were young
And you wanted to set the world on fire?
Somewhere deep down I know you do
Don't you remember when we were young
And we wanted to set the world on fire
Because I still am and I still do

-- Rise Against, *Architects* (2011)

If we just took a step back
A bigger picture we might view
Perhaps the man in the gutter
Is not so different from you

Come in, out of the cold
Forget all that you know
Because there's always been room
By the fire for you, oh
Come in, out of the cold

-- Rise Against, *Disparity by Design* (2011)

A Call to Remember, A Call to Occupy: Memory and the Movement

The art of memory is a clear case of a marginal subject, not recognized as belonging to any of the normal disciplines, having been omitted because it was no one's business. And yet it has turned out to be, in a sense, everyone's business.

-- Francis Yates, *The Art of Memory*

Cheerfulness, the good conscience, the joyful deed, confidence in the future – all of them depend . . . on one's being just as able to forget at the right time as to remember at the right time; on the possession of a powerful instinct for sensing when it is necessary to feel historically and when unhistorically.

-- Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*

The Occupy Movement, as it has come to be called, named the source of the crises of our time: Wall Street banks, big corporations, and others among the 1% are claiming the world's wealth for themselves at the expense of the 99% and having their way with our governments.

-- Sarah van Gelder, *This Changes Everything: Occupy Wall Street and the 99% Movement*

THE MEMORY THAT OCCUPIES

Memory will occupy the following investigation, and in return, the investigation will *Occupy* memory. In rhetorical studies, memory has an extensive and vibrant genealogy that stretches back to the very beginnings of the discipline, though the value afforded to memory within rhetoric has waxed and waned throughout its history. For example, Francis Yates points out how “the Greeks, . . . invented an art of memory which, like their other arts, was passed on to Rome whence it descended in the European tradition” (xi). This venerable “art of memory” is exemplified for rhetoricians in the classic works of Cicero, Quintilian, and the anonymous writer of the *Ad Herennium*.¹ These texts strive to develop an art for producing memories, for example, “through a technique of impressing ‘places’ and ‘images’ on memory” (xi), where rhetoricians would imagine vacant streets filled with memorable items to remind them of the contents and sequences of speeches; it is an “agrarian” practice where a tract of space is called to yield forth a mnemonic harvest. In short, then, memory was of great importance for classical rhetoricians, not only regarding the memorization of speech materials, but in relation to the improvement of memory, techniques for “making memorable” the contents of speeches, speed of memory-retrieval, the production of communal memory, and so on.

However, although memory was held in high esteem throughout the classical period and beyond, modernity would strike memory a blow from which it has yet to

¹ For what is likely the best exposition and analysis of the Latinate art of memory and its connection to the ancient rhetorical tradition, see Yates’ *The Art of Memory* 1-26. Therein, one finds an understanding of memory as *loci* that one occupies with various *topoi*.

recover due to an “industrialization” of its processes. For instance, as Sharon Crowley explains in *The Methodical Memory*, “[m]ethod was touted throughout the seventeenth century as an efficient way to learn almost any subject, since it relieved the burden placed on memory by calling on the assistance of reason” (35). Championed by rhetoricians such as Peter Ramus and philosophers like Rene Descartes, “method,” whether understood as a strategy for composing texts or conducting scientific research, was understood to entail a devaluation of memory via its mechanization, as it involved following a rote series of procedures that one could employ without making recourse to memory’s inventive powers (and, as Crowley notes, is still evident today in the pedagogy of Current-Traditional Rhetoric²) (85, 134). For example, consider that when following the standard five-paragraph (“fifty star”) strategy for composing, one can simply follow a memorized formula rather than inventively recombining and experimenting with various writing strategies that one has previously encountered.

² In *The Methodical Memory*, Crowley takes to task the persistent employment of “method” as found centuries later in Current-Traditional Rhetoric. She does this not only because she argues that CTR is essentially *not* a rhetoric because its’ processes stifle invention (155), but because this (problematic) stifling of invention is “complicit with the professional hierarchy that currently obtains in the American academy” (139). That is, it teaches students to become mindless drones who can reproduce a five-paragraph essay or other technical or business-oriented texts without having *to think*.

with written discourse, there was no further need to deal with memorizing
... [Thus,] [t]here will be no consideration in this book of this aspect of
rhetoric. (38 emphasis mine)

Corbett's narrative here is a commonplace one, basically, that memory died within rhetorical studies when writing (historically) began to take precedence over speech, and memorization was no longer a necessity in daily life and civic engagement. Corbett's is not only an over-simplified story, one that overlooks the importance of memory's industrial commodification in its modern devaluation, but it practically erases the possibility that memory might have an entirely new role to play in rhetoric today, especially as paradigms of production shift from memory's industrialization to what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri would call its *informatization* (*Empire* 284). Corbett's dismissal of memory has not gone unnoticed or unchallenged, though, for as Collin Gifford Brooke notes, "we are no less beholden to memory for the fact that we may no longer memorize speeches" (*Lingua* 35). And as Brooke notes as well, given the fact that memory has (for the most part) fallen into disrepute or disuse in rhetorical studies, "[p]erhaps more than any of the other four canons, memory is the one canon whose status as *practice* is in need of rehabilitation" (144).

What would it entail, though, to rehabilitate the *practice* of memory, or better still, to develop memory as a multifaceted *strategy* or series of *tactics* for approaching the rhetoric of events, artifacts, texts, and so on? In the words of Victor Villanueva, how does one recognize memory as a friend, answer memory's call, and invite "her" into one's scholarship and classroom ("Memoria" 19)? That is, in (and out of) the tradition of the

classical art of memory, the “method” of Ramus, Inc., as well as other historical memory practices, what strategies might one deploy in order to re-occupy memory today? In order to provisionally answer these questions, in the text that follows I approach memory along the following lines (of flight), arguing that it is: 1) produced rhetorically, both hermeneutically and non-hermeneutically, signaling that it is produced “in common” with others socially, both consciously and non-consciously; 2) memory is bound up in an inescapable relation with *forgetting* that means that one must think these two forces together (though irreducibly), 3) memory exerts an incredible persuasive force when it is linked to genealogies of local memory and struggle, and finally; 4) memory is intimately tied to action as its spur, especially as a source of rhetorical invention and civic in(ter)vention.³

In terms of strategy, therefore, throughout the text that follows I take as my first point of departure that memory is rhetorically produced. This is likely the most important supposition that I make throughout the course of the entire investigation, not only because it reveals memory’s fabricated(ness), dynamism, and historical-material contingency, but because it emphasizes the shared or “common” nature of memory, the notion that one’s seemingly “individual” memories and the thoughts, actions, and

³ In understanding memory as rhetorically produced, bound up with forgetting and local struggle, and rhetorically productive of action, it is clear that I agree with John Reynolds when he argues that “[r]ethinking memory, . . . requires that one first correct the record and challenge the firmly entrenched and faulty assumption that memory issues are limited to ‘memorizing the speech,’ and therefore [are] without written or electronic equivalents” (4).

accomplishments connected to them are produced through (and in relation to) the vast archive of languages, knowledge(s), codes, affects, images, and so on, shared and exchanged by the global multitude of humanity and beyond (Marx's "general intellect"). To clarify, memories (and lived experiences, too) are always framed in accordance with specific rhetorics/*dispositifs*, that is, according to informatically *shared* languages, *shared* logics, *shared* feelings, and so on, that are embedded within specific historical moments, cultural situations, or economic conditions, and provided a new series of rhetorical articulations, one can utterly metamorphose memory (and future experience). When this happens, one's "world," and likewise, the "worlds" of others, is made anew; memory now operates "counter" to how it once did. Where a population once perceived-remembered an activist demonstration confusedly or with hostility, after rhetorical reproduction, it may recall a band of heroes.

The potential for making memory anew is precisely why Michel Foucault argues that his primary task as an intellectual is "to show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain time during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed" (10). In other words, when subjects come to view their ways of perceiving-recollecting *as ways of perceiving-recollecting* that are alterable, given that they derive from historically- and culturally- contingent rhetorics, those subjects are freed to experiment with new and different ways of perceiving-recollecting, and new and different modes of existence (forms of life). It is therefore no exaggeration to claim that one of the most important contemporary theoretical insights into memory is its contingent,

rhetorical quality, given that memory is a rhetorical battleground composed of a dynamic series of pragmatic *truths*—truths that become especially important to defend in struggles where groups must assert the veracity of their experiences before judiciaries, tribunals, and the world at-large. Moreover, when one recognizes that the truths of one’s perception-recollection are irreducibly shared and social, that there are no “private memories,” as a Wittgensteinian might say, then one is more apt to work together with others in order to produce ways of perceiving and recollecting that are collectively productive, affirmative, joyful, and just.

Diane Davis emphasizes the above point concerning the rhetoricity of memory by averring that “all intelligibility, including self-intelligibility, is a tropological product” (*Inessential* 40), which is to say that making-sense as such is rhetorically derived. One can therefore transmute the ways by which one makes sense of (and articulates) life itself after being persuaded by, or being produced through, for example, a new vocabulary and its accompanying logics. A memory of one’s tenth birthday party with its bright colors and sounds is radically different ten years later, and more so twenty years later, not only due to forgetting, but given one’s way of rhetorically articulating/producing the truth of the event.

However, memories are not always rhetorically produced in ways that one is consciously aware of, or that one can interpret, for just as there is an interpretable (hermeneutic) dimension to rhetoric, as Davis points out, “there is also a *nonhermeneutical* dimension of rhetoric not reducible to meaning making, to offering up signs and symbols for comprehension” (67). For the purposes of “Occupying Memory,”

what this means is that memories are rhetorically produced not only in ways that one can remember and therefore interpret, but also in opaque ways that one has “forgotten” and therefore *cannot interpret*. Thus, the notion that memories are produced through memorable, interpretable means, as well as “forgotten,” *nonhermeneutical* means is one that I will continually emphasize throughout the following text.

The “forgetting” entailed in the nonhermeneutical production of memory dovetails into another one of my major methodological strategies, that is, the notion that memory and forgetting are inexorable, yet irreducible, forces. This is an extremely important point, for as Bradford Vivian succinctly explains, “[f]orgetting has a bad reputation” (*Public* 168), and it has this reputation because throughout histories of western rhetorics and philosophies, forgetting almost always signifies “loss, absence, or lack” (5), “oblivion, liquidation, or amnesia” (16), or worst of all, death (38). Vivian points out as well how:

[f]orgetting in these figurations, is not merely the opposite of memory; it parasitically haunts the act of recollection, thriving by virtue of a stealthy but lethal attachment to its host. Forgetting is [quite often figured as] memory’s unshakable other, a ghostly counterpart shadowing luminous representations of former experiences. (3)

Indeed, in the reductive/reactive binary machine that is often set up between memory and forgetting, memory is the privileged term, and forgetting is typically the dangerous and marginal other. Unfortunately, such is the case not only historically, but in many cases, contemporarily, when scholars regard forgetting suspiciously rather than as an integral,

productive, and affirmative force, preferring instead to “pitch a tent” for memory alone in a manner akin to the unforgettable “hero” of Jorge-Luis Borges’ “Funes the Memorious.” Throughout the following text, then, I will continually emphasize how the power of forgetting not only vaporizes any possibility for conceptualizing memory as an accurate or inaccurate *representation* of events, but I will emphasize how forgetting is integral in producing memories and aiding rhetorical communities in their efforts to live on in the wake of traumatic disasters.

Regarding the point that forgetting troubles the notion of memory as representation, Vivian explains how “[m]emory does not repeat an ideal and original impression of the same ‘unrepeatable’ event *ad infinitum*; it repeats a series of performative differences and transformations that supply the mere semblances of such an ‘unrepeatable’ origin” (125-126). In other words, from the outset, there is already an ontological difference or fold between the becoming of any material event and so-called “immediate experience,” which indicates that this “experience” is already a memory of the “forgotten” event; thus, every recollection of this memory in the future is a return, not to any original event itself, but to its “image” (Bergson). Any averred memory of a pure event is a phantasm. However, this is not to say that memories are somehow “unreal.” To the contrary, memories involve the production of realities and their truths rather than representations separate from the Truth of some ultimate Reality. Moreover, this is not to deny the supposition of a “purely” differentiated plane of immanent materiality, because memories are born of this plane and thoroughly embedded in it. Memories operate as breaks or folds in immanence that are incessantly reproduced each time new memories or

new rhetorics rearticulate them. This is why Vivian argues that “[a]cts of recollection invariably transform the nature of memory because the changing incitements and purposes of recollection ensure that we remember in different ways, even if we remember the same event” (115).

Furthermore, memories are best understood as non-representational images because they are always-already “contracted,” as Henri Bergson would say, cleaving away what they cannot (or have no need to) contain; forgetting is already at work in the formation of memory. This is why Vivian argues that “forgetting comprises an essentially productive aspect of memory rather than its unfortunate repression or erosion” (126). Indeed, Vivian’s complex observations about representation and reproduction are certainly of great importance, and worth carrying along for the duration of the following investigation.

Another key observation regarding forgetting that will serve as a point of departure for “Occupying Memory” follows on the heels of Nietzsche’s contention that *“the unhistorical and the historical are necessary in equal measure for the health of an individual, of a people and of a culture”* (Untimely 63). In other words, with regard to any given event, sometimes it is best for a society or a subject to remember, and sometimes it is best for them to forget. For instance, in the course of so-called “personal writing,” an instructor might encourage students to consider an event from their lives that, even though they will not literally forget it, they might wish to take steps to prevent from exerting a damaging influence on their lives. Or, on a “global” level, Vivian points out that “arguments to communally forget could produce socially, politically, and

ethically attractive outcomes” (*Public* 10). Granted, it is not always so that forgetting serves as a better guide to communal action than remembering, but it is often a question worth asking.

However, neither Nietzsche nor Vivian is suggesting that a culture become oblivious toward events from its past, only that there is often a way of “forgetfully” rhetorically articulating such events that is increasingly just. For example, in the wake of the attacks of September 11th, 2001, many Americans issued a call to “Never Forget,” a non-forgetting that resulted in increased hatred of and brutality toward innocent Muslim-Americans by having citizens incessantly (pathologically) recall an event carried out by a tiny number of Muslim religious fundamentalists. In this instance, Nietzsche would ask whether there is a way to “affirmatively forget” aspects of September 11th, 2001, or at least remember them differently, such that one can overcome one’s hatred or fears without forgetting the details of the tragedy itself, for instance, “forgetting” that the violence of September 11th, 2001, was carried out by Muslims, remembering instead that it was the work of religious extremists. Through this strategy, one can thus see how “forgetting” often simultaneously means “remembering differently” or counter-remembering in ways that oppose commonly accepted narratives.



Fig. 2. "Never Forget" 9/11.

The question of counter-memorial narratives leads nicely into my third point of departure for approaching memory, that is, via counter-memorial genealogy. As Foucault notes in *"Society Must Be Defended,"* genealogy is characterized, at least in one particular sense, by scholarly encounters with "local memories" (8), or more specifically, with writing a "memory of combats" through the "rediscovery of struggles and the raw memory of fights" (8). Thus, throughout this text, I want to unearth memories related to local struggle while revealing their rhetorical force, and even weave a short counter-history from them. For as Howard Zinn notes, there is a real persuasive power in writing history as it is based on local memory and struggle, and great inspiration in "disclosing those hidden episodes of the past when, even if in brief flashes, people showed their ability to resist, to join together, occasionally to win" (x).

More specifically, the history that I am interested in disrupting through writing a counter-memorial genealogy is none other than what Victor Vitanza calls *The History of Rhetoric*. For just as official political or military history, for instance, tends to focus on Great Men and Great Events, excluding much in the process, *The History of Rhetoric* tends to do the same. Hence, in revitalizing rhetorical memory by connecting it to local memory and struggle, I want to launch a preemptive strike against any History of Rhetoric that would exclude particular activist narratives as unimportant or marginal in contrast to mainstream political discourse. Like Vitanza, through my recourse to marginal memory, I want to reclaim against The History of Rhetoric “that which is under suppression, repression, political oppression” (4), and struggle against the dominant rhetorical discourse before that discourse is even fully articulated. My aim in what follows, therefore, is to begin *Occupying The History of Rhetoric*.

Following the above observations, it is perhaps no surprise, then, that the last of my four over-arching strategies for approaching memory throughout the following text involves action, which is appropriate given that the other “forgotten” rhetorical canon alongside memory (*memoria*) is delivery (*actio*). Indeed, memory (and forgetting) deliver(s) one forward, not merely as a “storehouse” for presenting speeches, but as spurs to movement as such. In fact, the main point in studying the rhetorical production of memories is to try and understand how subjects are compelled to action by having their memories produced in different ways. Bergson reinforces this point by observing that “we must never forget the utilitarian character of our mental functions, which are essentially turned toward action” (xvii); in fact, for him, memory functions by constantly

issuing an “invitation to act” (2). Nowhere is this call to action more visible than in activism itself, Occupy or otherwise, where one is constantly reminded of an ethically problematic state of affairs, and through that reminder one is compelled to enact change. For example, as this text progresses, I will show how activists from the Occupy Movement employ slogans, images, narratives, performances, demonstrations, marches, social media, and more—all of which assemble to produce a “common” (though not universally shared) memory of struggle that not only persuades activists to engage in direct action, but serves as an archive for argument whereby activists can defend their efforts and call others to their cause. I therefore conceive memory as functioning not only as the well-spring of invention (as did the ancients), I understand the production of memory as the provisional plateau of the so-called “rhetorical situation,” or in relation to this project specifically, the production of what I call, following Hardt and Negri, “biopolitical memory,” a form of memory that leads one to resist control (“being-against”), while “striv[ing] toward an alternative existence” (*Commonwealth* 57).

THE OCCUPATION OF MEMORY

After introducing this project’s theoretical orientation and laying out its methodological strategies, it is now time to take a look at the artifact(s) that will provide the project’s material “ground” for analysis: the Occupy Movement (or perhaps more accurately, the Occupy Movements). Granted, producing a succinct genealogy of Occupy is no easy thing, especially because it recalls such a long cycle of past struggles, but if one forsakes finding Occupy’s origin and begins *in the middle*, then surely the task is

feasible. Responding to a challenge issued by the Canadian magazine *Adbusters*, activists meeting at 16 Beaver Street in New York City formed Occupy's first rhizomatic node and began to develop the ground-game for Occupy Wall Street (#OWS), a series of direct actions whose name not only evokes the practice of "sit-ins" as a form of dissent and protest, for instance, during race struggles for civil rights, but one that entails the co-option and reversal of traditional military imagery. Thus, from the outset, Occupy connected not only to a rich genealogy of activist practice, but the movement employed that memory of struggle as a spur to action in the name of socio-economic justice. Moreover, the Occupy Movement has (rhetorically, "practically") metamorphosed "occupying" from a terrifying, violent prospect fraught with death, theft, and imperial dominance into one that signals the building of progressive communities based on mutual love, respect, and care—one mode of political action was thus "forgotten," and another remembered.

"Occupy" as a term therefore signals nothing less than a Nietzschean revaluation of values and the coming of a collective assemblage of subjects intent on actualizing those values, establishing them in counter-memorial fashion through the production of new subjectivities as/and new memories. Indeed, "to Occupy" now signals engaging in a rigorous and energetic "being-against" contemporary regimes of power (Capital and Empire), as well as a refreshingly audacious, optimistic "being-toward-the-future," as the voice of a millennial generation come of age begins to speak, calling those from all generations to its cause. Therefore, as I will strive to demonstrate throughout, to "Occupy" memory will mean, among other things, to dwell within and upon memory,

such that one might deploy it as a force to resist as well as “affirmatively forget” the hegemony of neoliberal capitalism and military-industrial adventurism, accomplishing this feat not only through theoretical analysis, but by reinvigorating the seemingly “forgotten” energy of past generations in their struggles for justice and peace.



Fig. 3. Occupy Wall Street Inaugural Poster.

On September 17th, 2011, the first Occupy activists, inspired by memories of the so-called Arab Spring, uprisings in Europe, labor protests in Wisconsin, and more, set up camp in Zuccotti Park (aka “Liberty Plaza”) and began the non-violent occupation of the figural heart of global capitalism and neoliberal economic policy. Gathered together to take a stand against the rapacious ethical negligence of multinational corporations and

banks, the usurpation of American democracy by the financial elite, and the forgetting of the needs of 99% of Americans/the global multitude in favor of the plutocratic 1%, they would have never guessed that their actions would spark a national, and ultimately international, progressive movement—while invigorating a newly coalesced American Left—one directly intertwined with, and continuing the work of, previous struggles such as the women’s movements, civil rights movements, GBLT movements, and more.⁴ Indeed, through the efforts of the first Occupiers, those waves of anti-hegemonic counter-memory echoing throughout the globe would find a focal point, and then explode outward to transform the subjectivities of entire coalitions, not only within the US, but invigorate subjects throughout the world as they remembered the living potential for resistance, action, and change.

Furthermore, with breathtaking speed activists in New York City succeeding in creating a fully-functioning community based on an *ethos*⁵ of mutual responsibility and

⁴ Although *Occupying Memory* will focus primarily on the Occupy movement as it has unfolded in the United States, as Sarah Gelder notes, the movement quickly “spread worldwide, to over 1,500 cities, from Madrid to Cape Town and from Buenos Aires to Hong Kong, involving hundreds of thousands of people” (2). This proliferation is due, in large part, to the structure of Occupy as “a movement of movements,” that is, as a “big tent” that draws together activists from divergent causes and sets them to work on shared goals.

⁵ Significantly, according to Michael Halloran, “[t]he most concrete meaning given for the term [*ethos*] in the Greek lexicon is ‘a habitual gathering place,’ and [Halloran] suspect[s] that it is upon this image of people gathering together in a public place, sharing experiences and ideas, that its meaning of

care for others (a “twenty-four-hour-a-day experiment in egalitarian living”) (Gelder 8), or a “remembering of the other” standing in stark contrast to the neoliberal ideology of staunch individualism and untrammelled capitalist accumulation. The community in Liberty Plaza not only organized itself in a non-hierarchical (“horizontal” or “leaderless”) manner where everyone had a voice and could contribute (often with an emphasis on marginalized groups such as the “OccuQueers” and “OccuKrips”), but they also fed the hungry, amassed an impressive library, created multiple projects, classes, and working groups, produced the booming song and dance of a festival, maintained an extensive campgrounds, and held endless conversations about how they might build a better world, one that served everyone rather than merely the wealthy and the powerful. Indeed, it was through these efforts that a particular “common” (shared, non-universal) memory of struggle began to be produced, one that, although permeated with deep differences, produced a network of subjects engaged in action in order to overcome those economic difficulties “burned in” to the memory of occupying subjects.

Moreover, the “direct democratic” decision-making at Occupy Wall Street took (and still takes) place in a forum called the General Assembly (GA), where an ideal of “consensus”⁶ drives participants to not only remember everyone and take their thoughts

[‘]character[’] rests” (60). In other words, with regard to the current project, it seems that having *ethos* is closely linked to *occupying*.

⁶ Though “consensus” decision-making is a laudable ideal, it is important to remember the warnings regarding it issued by philosophers like Jean-Francois Lyotard and rhetoricians like Diane Davis. As Davis points out, “[c]onsensus, . . . always leaves a ‘residue beyond its control’” (*Breaking* 182), which

into consideration (which is a painstaking and messy process), but requires that practically the entire assembly agree with or consent to all group actions and statements. Equally impressive, and driven by the wide-spread use of archival, participatory social media such as Facebook and Twitter, was that within only a few days of the inauguration of Occupy Wall Street, similar sites began to bloom across the country, taking root and calling citizens to action in cities from Seattle and Austin to Philadelphia and Atlanta in such rapid fashion that the renowned philosopher Cornell West was “spiritually break-dancing” with excitement (and I, like Felix Guattari during the sixties, felt as though I was walking on the ceiling).



Fig. 4. Occupy Wall Street in Zuccotti Park (“Liberty Plaza”).

means that in the attempt to achieve it, someone’s voice is typically silenced and *forgotten*. For more on consensus and forgetting, see Lyotard’s *Community at Loose Ends*.

Granted, it is impossible to recall/outline all the reasons why activists were driven to participate in the Occupy Movement, and this multiplicity of motives is one reason why the movement as such issued no unified statement of demands. Yet as Judith Butler explains, “any list of demands would not exhaust the ideal of justice that is being enacted” through the movement itself (“Precarity” 12). However, there are over-arching grievances and desires of those in the movement, a “common” (shared, non-universal) memory of struggle, and subjectivities/memories that have been produced in a specific way, that at the risk of being reductive are important to explain, especially given the suspicious “amnesia”—the “unproblematic forgetting”—expressed in the ever-returning question: “But what does Occupy want?” (which, repeated by corporate media as an obfuscating mantra, has become an all-too-common *topos*).

To take up this question (genealogically), though, one of the primary reasons why the Occupy Movement is taking place is due to inequitable wealth distribution in the US and around the globe brought about by the systemic effects of global finance capitalism, a state of affairs made all-the-more problematic given that it is combined with class exploitation and a “forgetting” of the needs of the multitude. Along these lines, Sarah Gelder explains how:

the wealthiest among us have rigged the system to enhance their own power and wealth at the expense of everyone else. . . . the government actively facilitates this concentration of wealth through tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy, and bailouts for giant banks and corporations. (3)

With the above observations in mind, it is quite apparent that in the US Occupy entails a backlash against multiple decades of neoliberal (deregulated capitalist) hegemony, a “being-against” characterized by palpable anger at the fact that the richest, most powerful, country on earth is falling far short of its potential to care for its citizenry, and moreover, that the election of seemingly transformative figures such as Barack Obama could do little to remedy the problem (since both the Democratic and Republican parties have essentially been “purchased” by the financial elite). This supposition becomes increasingly clear as well when one turns to a genealogy of Capital in the US and globally, considering the shift from what David Harvey calls “embedded liberalism” to neoliberalism, or the move to systematically destroy Keynesian economic measures that provided for far greater numbers of the populace. Or as Harvey himself summarizes, drawing out the genealogy:

the whole history of embedded liberalism and the subsequent turn to neoliberalization indicates the crucial role played by class struggle in either checking or restoring elite class power. Though it has been effectively disguised, we have lived through a whole generation of sophisticated strategizing on the part of ruling elites to restore, enhance, or . . . to construct an overwhelming class power. (201)

Indeed, standing in contrast to the memory of an “embedded liberal” or post-New Deal era where public education, infrastructure, environmental stewardship, healthcare, and various programs founded upon a notion of shared social responsibility at least made *some* noteworthy inroads, today the wealthy elite have fought to almost entirely eliminate

any sort of financial safety net, environmental regulation, opportunity for upward mobility, and so on, predicated upon the spurious valorization of “personal responsibility” and Randian individualism. Moreover, as the plutocratic elite continue to persuade a significant portion of the US population to adopt its values, and as Spinoza would say, “fight *for* their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation” (*Anti-Oedipus* 29), the middle class is eroding, homes are being foreclosed on every corner, and American and global ecologies are in peril. Moreover, America and those countries swimming in its hegemonic wake are increasingly developing *ethoi* of *me* rather than *we*, and the Occupy Movement stands in opposition to this trend, contending that the hyper-masculine, honor-bound *ethoi* of such cultures is neither desirable nor inevitable, given that the self-interested forgetting of others is nowhere entrenched in human nature (or human behavior is just as inclined toward cooperation as it is competition and cooperation itself is the most beneficial strategy for “individuals”). In a word, the provisional plateau at stake involves recalling the *historical* and *economic* factors that have produced the present state of capitalist crisis through genealogical analysis, so as to resist inscribing that crisis into an unchanging (“fallen”) human essence—a move which produces counter-remembering subjects who oppose their exploitation.

Indeed, one reason why the Occupy Movement stands in opposition to neoliberal hegemony and the absence of measures to return wealth to those who have produced it, are the outcomes that these unregulated capitalist practices entail (and Occupy’s often overt opposition to capitalism is striking, recalling rhetorical pitches not seen since the earliest decades of the twentieth century). For in contrast to a country where the

American Dream is considered the highest ideal, made possible through shared social and economic responsibility, today fewer and fewer Americans remember/believe that Dream, or that its facilitation by so-called “free markets” and “trickle-down” economics, has any resonance for them. In short, many Americans no longer believe that working hard and playing by the rules, or the success of those in power, will ensure their success, and they are prepared to rhetorically “forget” those who would continue to feed them such narratives. As Gelder explains,

“[t]alk to people at any of the Occupy sites and you’ll hear stories of people who play by the rules, work long hours, study hard, and then find only low-wage jobs, often without health care coverage or prospects for a secure future . . . [a]nd many can find no job at all. (4)

Moreover, many Occupiers remember a time when the above state of affairs was less extreme, and they recall watching as measures to regulate Capital and return wealth to its producers were eroded. In other words, thanks to memories of better times along with memories of increasing hardships despite increasingly hard work, most participants in the movement understand the dismissal economic situation facing most Americans as something besides a *personal* failure. The shame and guilt once felt in the face of unemployment, debt, and foreclosure has been replaced, or counter-remembered (thanks to oppositional rhetorics), by a capacity to think systemically rather than individually—a counter-remembering that entails a shift from the neoliberal discourses of “austerity” and “belt-tightening” to those of “economic justice.” As Gelder explains,

[m]illions now recognize that we are not to blame for a weak economy, for a subprime mortgage meltdown, or for a tax system that favors the wealthy but bankrupts the government. The 99% are coming to see that we are collateral damage in an all-out effort by the super-rich to get even richer. (2)

In other words, through rhetorics coming from Occupy and elsewhere, many from the multitude are counter-remembering, and thus becoming aware that they are the victims of, as Noam Chomsky puts it, “about thirty years of a really quite bitter class war that has led to social, economic and political arrangements in which the system of democracy has been shredded” (54). And it is a war that has been enacted rather stealthily, whereby Wall Street and the American plutocracy have occupied the US so as to vampirize its wealth as though it were another nation.⁷ And in relation to the military term “Occupy,” one might

⁷ The image of Wall Street occupying America recalls another important meaning of the term “Occupy,” namely, military occupation of foreign territories. Indeed, one of the underlying messages implicit in the slogan “Occupy Wall Street” is the call to *not* occupy other countries, to *not* engage in brutal imperial occupations in the name of freedom and liberation. This theme is also prevalent in calls within the movement to, as Angela Davis puts it, “(Un)Occupy” or (de)colonize. As Davis herself explains,

We must be aware when we say ‘Occupy Wall Street’ or ‘Occupy Washington Square’ that occupations in other countries are violent and brutal. Palestine remains occupied territory, and we have to learn how to say ‘no’ to military occupations. (*Occupy!* 133)

I predict that if the US continues its escalation of military intervention into Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, or elsewhere in the coming months or years, this underlying significance of the term “Occupy” will come increasingly to the fore, especially as the costs of war in both economic and ethical terms are illuminated.

venture to understand the movement as a great “No!” to war as such, its joyous and affirmative forgetting, along with a search for alternatives, whether that war is an imperial one waged in the name of peace and freedom, or a class war waged against the general populace.

Of course, given that the slogan of Occupy is “We are the 99%,” another critical question regarding the movement is who the 99% are (*becoming*). On the one hand, the 99% are tantamount to basically what is claimed—the 99% percent of Americans who control a shockingly small portion of the country’s wealth and power (despite the fact that they produced that wealth), in contrast to the 1% of Americans who control over 40% of the country’s wealth and have more direct access to financial and political power. In short, the 99% share a “common” memory of socio-economic struggle, based particularly on indebtedness and failures of representative politics to alleviate such unjust arrangements.

On the other hand, although very high numbers support the Occupy Movement and its aims, far fewer take to the streets to identify as the 99% themselves, despite the fact 98% of Americans reside outside the highest income bracket. For some, this presents an opportunity to ridicule the movement for its incapacity to count or its pretense to represent anyone, though this is a hasty claim to lodge against a movement that enacts a direct critique of political representation,⁸ and contends that most citizens are either misinformed by corporate media or simply too exhausted or frightened to speak out.

⁸ For more on Occupy and the failure of political representation, see Hardt and Negri’s “The Fight for ‘Real Democracy’ at the Heart of Occupy Wall Street” in *Foreign Affairs*.

Regardless, it is safe to say that activists and participants in the movement, if they are not *representatives* of the 99%, are at least a significant sample of those Americans who are bearing the burdens of the current American (and global) financial crisis, and who have come to *dis*-identify their interests from the interests of the plutocracy. For example, as Gelder points out:

Among the 99% are recent graduates and veterans who can't find work, elderly who fear losing their pensions, the long term unemployed, the homeless, peace activists, people with a day job in a corporate office who show up after work, members of the military, and off-duty police. Those involved cannot be pigeonholed. They are as diverse as the people of this country and world. (6)

As Gelder explains, the members of the 99% are incredibly diverse, as are the “members” of Occupy who directly participate in the movement. They come from innumerable social, cultural, and political backgrounds, and fight for a vast number of causes woven together by a critique of socio-economic injustice. But attempting to list these backgrounds and causes is therefore an undertaking nearly equivalent to counting stars, so I will not attempt to do so. Instead, I will direct readers to the archival “wearethe99percent.tumblr.com” blogsite, where so many have shared their compelling and heartbreaking stories, and reveal that although the 99% come from divergent backgrounds, they are pulled together not only by memories of struggle, but also a specific way of rhetorically framing that struggle.

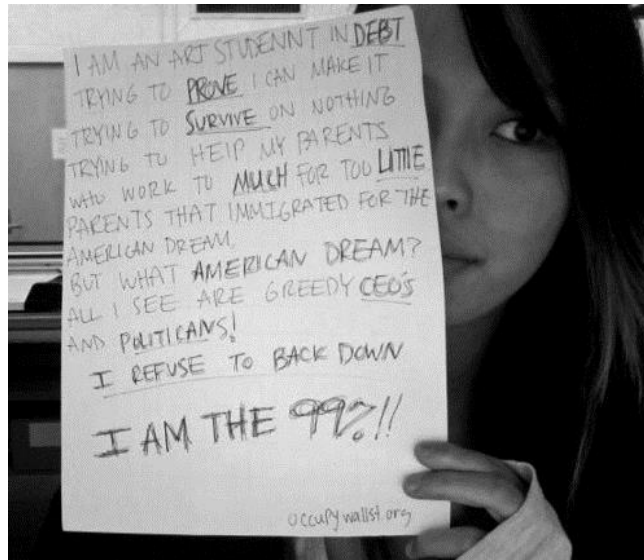


Fig. 5. “We are the 99%” Tumblr. Blog.

Regardless of the impossibility of finally doing justice to the complexity of the movement and its participants, though, in many ways, the following text is an attempt to remember the class struggles of the 99% (reproducing subjectivities through said counter-remembering), as I wrestle to develop rhetorical theses by reading Occupy through the theoretical frames of memory and forgetting. Before I can engage in this task any farther, however, it is important that I discuss the audience and goals of my work, as well as my targets for critique and the limitations therein.

AUDIENCE AND GOALS, TARGETS AND LIMITS

To begin, I do not presume that this is a work for everyone. In fact, it is targeted at some very specific audiences which include readers interested in rhetoric, rhetorical and cultural theory, as well as contemporary European philosophy; readers interested in theoretical approaches to memory, pedagogy, technology, and social movements; and, of course, activists themselves, Occupy or otherwise. And although I certainly feel the tension involved in claiming to write a text *for the 99%* when that text targets (quite often) an academic audience, I hope that this is not perceived as a performative contradiction. The reason why, is that I conceive the *for* in *for the 99%* in the sense of a gift or contribution, and thus as a site for taking up the particularly difficult questions that present themselves at the intersections of the work and the gift (Shershow). Given that the Occupy Movement has captured my imagination and earned my solidarity and participation, however, I want to give back in a way that few can, that is, by theorizing the movement, understanding its rhetorical power and promise, and conveying those potentialities (or “virtualities”) to others. But although the artifact that serves to ground this text is the Occupy Movement, it is important to note up front that it is, at its heart, a text that concerns the rhetoric of memory and forgetting. My recourse to the movement and desire to further its aims, although not secondary, are inexorably bound up with academic arguments concerning the rhetorical canon of memory, memorials, technology, writing pedagogy, and so on. In other words, the text that follows is written from the perspective of a rhetorician, or more specifically, a rhetorical theorist of memory and forgetting.

Of course, given that I write this text from the perspective of a rhetorical theorist, many of my goals for it are formulated with this particular frame in mind. For instance, one series of goals are related to radically revitalizing rhetorical memory, and it would greatly please me if academic and other readers came away from this text with a renewed sense of the promise of memory for rhetorical studies and other related fields. And it would please me as well if academic readers, especially those in rhetoric, came away from the text with the realization that memory already (latently) pervades many areas of the discipline, and serves as a bridge to other disciplines such as philosophy and cultural studies. Of course, alongside my distinctly academic goals, I also have activist-oriented goals for this project. I hope that my analysis of the Occupy Movement is of academic interest, and I hope that it sparks an increased fascination in the movement among certain academic circles, but perhaps more importantly, I hope (rather audaciously) that this text furthers the dreams and desires of the Occupy Movement in helping to create an America and world where the 99% can find release from socio-economic precariousness in order to breathe freely, live joyously and productively, and increasingly flourish. My aim is not a utopian one, but as Judith Butler proclaims, “[i]f hope is an impossible demand, then we demand the impossible” (*Occupy!* 193).

Given my over-arching goals are to rethink and rekindle rhetorical memory and to further the aims of the Occupy Movement, it follows that my analysis critiques those forces that would prevent the fulfillment of these goals. For instance, regarding the rhetoric of memory, I critique the notion that memory has “emancipatory” potential, as though memory might free one from the processes of subjectivity-production in order to

establish identity. I critique the method of overlooking the power of image and affect in the production of memory by focusing solely on discourse, as well as the ideological refusal to see forgetting as an affirmative and productive force. I critique overreliance on the concept of “*public* memory” that unfortunately can blind one to the power of what I call “common memory,” along with the Platonism that regards technology as a danger to memory and personal identity. I critique reducing the efficacy of contemporary social movements to either social media or revolutionary solidarity (recognition-memory), and the problematic belief in memory as representation or “presence.” I critique the denunciation of remix culture or remixed memory as facile and ineffective, the contention that students should no longer write about themselves, and much else relevant to the discipline of rhetorical studies.

Not surprisingly, my critique also extends to those forces against which the Occupy Movement struggles, the forces of unfettered neoliberal/Capital accumulation, the concept of a sovereign, Enlightenment subject who can think and act without the influence or assistance of others (that is, a subject who can supposedly get rich on their own), ideological refusals to see the value of labor and the importance of wealth and material conditions in creating or preventing opportunity, the violent destruction of freedom of speech and assembly, the refusal to recognize the suffering of the 99% or the audacious claim that they are solely responsible for their own suffering, caricatures of the movement’s participants, as well as political pessimism and academic nihilism more generally.

However, both my goals and my critiques run up against limits. First and foremost, the limit of which I speak is my own immanent material nature, my own incapacities. I do not know what this body can do, as Spinoza would say, but I certainly know it cannot do/know everything. Likewise, as Blanchot explains, memory and forgetting are forces that ruin one's power to dispose of them; they destroy any pretense to have completely understood them. Indeed, memory and forgetting are singular forces, radical multiplicities, and as such will thwart any attempt at mastery. One can say the same about the Occupy Movement, for as cultural theorist George Shulman explains, "[this] fluid cacophonous, and polyvalent assemblage . . . will necessarily, thankfully, elude our grasp" (N.p.). Moreover, with regard to theorizing Occupy specifically, I should state up front that I rely heavily on post-structuralist theories that some may find too divorced from analyses of economics or capitalist dynamics,⁹ or too dismissive of Modern conceptions of a "free" subject, though I will continually evoke the historical and speculative materialisms of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, as well as the revolutionary theories of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. Regardless of my specific strategies and pet philosophers, however, as the *ethos* of the Occupy Movement itself

⁹ By point out that this text focuses less on capitalist dynamics than it might, I am noting up-front a near-absence of overt references to Marx and classical materialism. However, readers can rest assured that Marx *haunts* every corner of this text, and that I agree with Jacques Derrida when he writes that: "[t]here will be no future without this. Not without Marx, no future without Marx, without the memory and the inheritance of Marx: in any case of a certain Marx, of his genius, of at least one of his spirits" (*Specters* 14).

operates, I hope that those who recognize my limitations or have potential disagreements with me can still find a way to achieve a provisional (perhaps “inessential”) solidarity in order to move forward to achieve common goals. This is the especially the case given that I see the following text as a performance of political advocacy through theory, which entails the pragmatic contention that what a philosophy *can do* is more important than what it *means*. The point is changing the world.

OUTLINES OF AN OCCUPATION

In my efforts to further revitalize rhetorical memory through an analysis of the Occupy Movement, the trajectory of my text is as follows, employing a four-chapter structure.

The dissertation’s first chapter, “Becoming-Activist: On the Production of Memory as a Rhetorical Problem,” seeks to demonstrate how memory is rhetorically produced through language, images, affect, and trauma, and argues that such productions of memory are bound to productions of subjectivity. I begin by showing how memories are produced through discourse, or more specifically, how discourses come to frame and articulate the truths of memory, especially when discursive phrases are repeated by subjects in concert with (and transmitted via) other subjects. I then show how memories are produced by images, looking carefully at how the contexts in which visual icons are deployed can reshape their historically remembered meanings, and at the power of images to compel action by producing “counter-memories” in opposition to official narratives. I conclude the chapter with an examination of the generative role that

forgetting plays in the production of memory through a careful analysis of affect and trauma.

The second chapter, “Giving an Account of One’s Wealth: Percentile Narratives and Memory Analysis in Contemporary Composition,” strives to develop a strategy for teaching composition called “im-personal writing.” As an example of im-personal writing, I discuss assigning “Percentile Narratives” such as those from the Occupy Movement and its detractors, wherein students discuss the material conditions of their lives and the memories connected to them. However, rather than having students interpret the memories of their Percentile Narratives, or having an instructor decide whether or not they are “authentic,” students investigate how their memories have been rhetorically produced by images, discourse, affect, and so on. In this way, the strategy escapes criticisms that are typically leveled against so-called “personal writing” by viewing the activity not as emancipatory, but as an experiment within different modes of rhetorical subjection. After analyzing sample Percentile Narratives from Bergsonian, Foucauldian, and Freudian perspectives, I conclude the chapter by discussing how students can engage in a Nietzschean experiment, putting their memories (or forgettings) into the service of their lives, and argue that by theoretically shifting from Foucault’s early work to his late, one can view having students write about themselves as a liberatory act even as it simultaneously makes them visible before power.

In the dissertation’s third chapter, “The Infinite Archive: Social Media and the Revolutionary Extension of Memory,” I begin by arguing that the binary opposition between so-called “live” and “technological” memory deconstructs, which means that the

digitization of memory entails a “hyper-extension” rather than “externalization” of memory. Furthermore, I contend that such hyper-extension leads to radical metamorphoses in memory’s structure along with multitudinous reproductions of subjectivity. In support of these various contentions, I analyze three significant cases wherein subjects hyper-extended memory onto a digital plane via social media. The first of these is Twitter, which I argue not only transforms memory through short-term, rhizomatic bursts, but also facilitates the production of revolutionary “swarm memory” formations. Next, I look at narrated live streaming video, contending that it scrambles the distinction between recording and human memory, revealing them both as machinic and prosthetic. Turning to viral memes and the productive processes of rip/mix/burn, I argue that all memory, so-called “live” and “technological,” makes recourse to a similar inventive process, and that through repetition, memes can facilitate a cultural “working through” of trauma. The chapter concludes by analyzing digital an-archivization or “forgetting,” particularly as it regards information overload and surveillance, and I consider the power of forgetting as a strategy for resistance.

Chapter Four, “Stiller than Still: Monumental Bodies and the Challenge of Common Memory,” contains the two-fold contention that (singular) bodies and specific vernacular living structures can function as monuments, and that the form of memory these monuments produce is a “common” as opposed to “public” memory. I begin by arguing that because bodies posed in particular configurations and certain living structures possess an aesthetic quality, this not only gives them a monumental force, but inverts the relationship between monuments and time (as well as leads to re-

conceptualization of their destruction). The argument then takes up the question of what type of memory such monuments produce, contrasting against it a “public” memory linked to state control, political representation, and the effacement of difference. Conversely, I posit that monumental bodies and their adjoining structures produce a “common” memory linked to autonomous self-management, participatory democracy, and the preservation of radical difference. The chapter concludes by taking up the question concerning “common” forgetting, an idea I conceive as closely linked to affirmative forgetting and counter-memory.

“Occupying Memory” culminates, not with a traditional conclusion, but with “(Beginnings) Memories of the Future,” as I consider what further potential rhetorical memory might have in store, as well as the relationship between memory and the future. To accomplish these ends, I call others to join the conversation regarding the significance of memory in rhetorical studies, consider other strategies for rhetorical analysis that might serve to maximize memory’s force, and argue that memory is transformative when it is understood as future-directed. Likewise, I challenge readers to take up the vital task of valuing forgetting as much as memory, as well as viewing memory and forgetting as inextricable forces, and contend that doing so will have significant effects, not only politically, but ethically, economically, and more. I contend that forgetting promotes the event of “beginning again,” and therefore enacts an escape from the repetition of the same by directing one toward the future. Finally, I discuss what recalling specific social justice movements might be able to teach rhetoricians about memory and forgetting, especially as they regard the relationship between these intertwined forces and hope. My

speculations remain tentative, however, as I do not wish to diminish the capacity of such movements to enact revolutionary change.

Chapter #1 -- Becoming-Activist: On the Production of Memory as a Rhetorical Problem

There's no subject, but a production of subjectivity: subjectivity has to be produced, when its time arrives, precisely because there is no subject.

-- Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*

But time as subject, or rather subjectivation, is called memory.

-- Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*

Contending there is no subjectivity prior to its production, and that one can conceive of the subject as memory, Gilles Deleuze provides a lever with which to begin prying rhetorical conceptions of memory away from their historical beginnings. In the ancient world, memory is a gift of the Muses to the skilled rhetor, one *capable* of prodigious feats of memorization thanks to an art (*technê*) of archiving/organizing not only seemingly unmediated experiences, but a treasure-trove of commonplaces (*topoi*) for reactivation in opportune moments. Since Greco-Roman rhetors understood memory as an art or craft, the story usually has it (however oversimplified¹⁰) that when Modern rhetoricians gained the power of print-technologies, memory no longer required

¹⁰ Sharon Crowley demonstrates how the decline of memory in the Modern era is due not only to technological factors, but several ideological, methodological, and philosophical shifts (*The Methodical Memory*).

cultivation as a skill and thereby lost its importance. Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that when rhetoricians attempt to revitalize memory today, this endeavor is usually taken up in relation to teaching *proficiency* with navigating/deploying digital media-archives. So regardless of historical era, due to its “canonical” status as an intellectual capacity, the rhetorical conception of memory typically assumes a foundational humanist subject that exists prior to forming its memories and accumulating argumentative *topoi* from others. However, what Deleuze suggests in the epigraphs above is that not only is memory rhetorically produced and therefore never unmediated, but this is so because “the subject” is largely *an effect* of an archive of productive forces that constitute its very existence. Thus, in contrast to conceptions of rhetorical memory that posit a “pre-existing” subject with the power to remember (or is proficient with remembering technologies), in what follows, I submit that subjectivity’s existence is to a significant degree *predicated upon* the rhetorical production of memory/forgetting. So like Jeff Pruchnic and Kim Lacey, I am interested in “recuperating the connections between rhetoric and memory . . . as forces that are co-implicated generally in everyday subjective experience” (473), while extending such an analysis to encompass a broad conception of subjectivity that exceeds lived experience.¹¹

My exploration into the rhetorical production of memory/forgetting and its effectuations of subjectivity covers four different types, including discursive, imagistic,

¹¹ As Grant David Bollmer notes, when considering rhetorical memory/forgetting, it is critical that “[w]e . . . stop thinking of ‘subjective’ as referring to the human psyche. The subject is not strictly psychological” (462).

affective and traumatic production, and these investigations reveal how memory is an assemblage or matrix constitutive of subjectivity rather than the stored representations of a (transcendent) subject of his or her “immediate” lived experience. The first form of memory-production that I explore is discursive production, or more broadly, the production of memory through language. I deploy Michel Foucault’s theory regarding subjectivity as an archive of discursive “memory,” one that posits the subject as a locus of subjectivation by language that is inescapably shared with others. I then examine the production of memory via images, both in general terms regarding the manifold of perception-recollection as a flowing series of memory-images, and in terms of how specific images are productive of politically-charged “counter-memory.” Throughout, I rely on Henri Bergson’s theories of memory, specifically his contentions that so-called “immediate” experience is already memory (and is saturated by memories), and that memory is a non-representational force connected to the incitement of action.

The third and fourth types of memory-production that I examine involve a shift in focus from memory to forgetting, or to highlighting memory and forgetting’s interconnected operations. Affect involves “forgetting” because it concerns the “rhetorical” force that (singular) bodies exert upon one another without conscious awareness, yet produce subjectivity and movement nonetheless. Following Diane Davis, I argue that this “forgotten” sharing of affect between (singular) bodies constitutes a non-declinable “rhetoricity,” one that challenges the notion of an atomized, self-sufficient “individual,” and reveals itself, for example, in the course of events such as protest rallies where hundreds or thousands of “singularities” non-consciously compel one another’s

actions. Finally, I deploy the theories of Jenny Edkins and Maurice Blanchot to explore the traumatic production of memory, more specifically, the ways in which traumatic events affect (singular) bodies through violence, betrayal, and “world-loss,” while producing subjects that compose narratives of their “forgotten,” yet troubling encounters.

But my argument is not only that the subject is an effect of rhetorical productions of memory; it is also that these rhetorical productions are the very condition of possibility for effective ethical and socio-political action. I turn throughout to specific examples from the Occupy Movement as evidence of this latter contention, and to instances where subjects underwent a “becoming-activist,” a metamorphic transformation of subjectivity that spurred them to strive for socio-political change. In other words, I focus on cases where the production of memory is not only rhetorical, but *biopolitical* (*Commonwealth* 119-128). For Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, biopolitics entails the birth of subjects who resist domination and control by particular regimes of power, “being-against” those regimes via their own productive powers in order to invent/experiment with alternative modes of existence.¹² Regardless, I maintain that subjects are inescapably produced by rhetorics, for there is no subject that can transcend the material and historical processes of its production in archival form. I therefore close the chapter with a brief consideration of memory’s biopolitical production, analyzing the biopolitical subject’s capacity to resist

¹² The subject whose memory is produced biopolitically is a subject who, Michel Foucault would say, “counter-remembers,” not merely in the sense of a reaction against dominant forms of remembrance, but as the active, non-dialectical invention of alternative ways of perceiving, remembering, and living.

control and open up avenues to alternative forms of life, as well as this subject's "forward-looking gaze," its relationship to freedom, the future, and "new worlds."

MIC-CHECK! THE DISCURSIVE PRODUCTION OF MEMORY

"Discursive memory," or in classical terms, "the memory of words," is the memory about which Michel Foucault writes at length—*the archive*.¹³ The archive is constituted by the discourses that frame/articulate the perceived and recollected truths of a subject's world, and moreover, it is the language by which the subject conceives of itself. In fact, for Foucault, the terms "memory" and "the archive" are synonymous with subjectivity (since he focuses on subjectivity as a discursive event). Thus, Foucault suggests that subjects do not experience life in an unmediated or spontaneous fashion, but rather, "belatedly." For indeed, whatever subjects experience or remember, they always-already frame it with regard to the discourses to which they have been subject (whether subjectivated by their parents, school, church, workplace, and so on). Subjects therefore carry their discursive "memory" or "archive" wherever they go, and their experiences and recollections are produced and articulated through it such that Foucault infamously contends that "the subject (and its substitutes) must be stripped of its creative role and analyzed as a complex and variable function of discourse" (*Language* 138). For one can only think or "see," remember or invent, through the vocabularies that one has been subjectivated by—which is why Victor Vitanza says "we are . . . , a function of rhetoric" (170). Furthermore, because the language by which one articulates one's world (one's

¹³ For more on Foucault's concept of the archive, see *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (126-131).

“archive” or “memory”) is contingent and changeable, this entails that *who one is* as a subject is contingent and changeable, and that one can transform one’s image of oneself by encountering new language. Moreover, Foucault’s position entails that there is no underlying essential “self” without its prior production in language. So who one is (becoming) is never static, never an unchanging substance or soul, but instead is the function of an ever-shifting series of discourses.¹⁴

Furthermore, the discourse productive of memory is inescapably shared/sharable, which means that one cannot think/invent or “communicate” in isolation. Discursive memory is non-declinably interlinked to and dependent upon others, caught up in an endless process of transmission/repetition, subject to subject, generation to generation. So in order to think, invent, and “communicate,” subjects must participate in an expansive game of Telephone where they first archive, and by doing so *become*, what is transmitted by others, and where productive differences creep in as one repeats the game. This is perhaps one reason Bradford Vivian argues that “[m]emories subsist in a state of dispersion but do not exist in the form of unified or stable presence” (126). For the shared

¹⁴ For an argument related to Foucault’s regarding how the production of memory occurs through discursive means, one can turn to Jacques Derrida’s essay “Plato’s Pharmacy” (*Dissemination*). Therein, he argues that “[t]he outside is already *within* the work of memory,” meaning that memory’s production inescapably occurs through (in relation to) discursive marks. This is the case because, as Derrida notes, memory requires signs in order to recall anything that is not already “present,” and because there is no pure presence of any phenomenon, this implies that all recognition and remembrance require signs or discourse (109). In other words, there is no “raw” experience or memory of events without their prior articulation in language (or more expansively, rhetorics).

discursive “archive” or “memory” that partially constitutes subjectivity is in flux without possessing an original form, being reproduced differently every time one subject addresses (or shares discourse with) another. Moreover, if the discursiveness of memory is the result of an endless process of productive and shared transmission, it is always the language of others that one remembers, and therefore one’s “own” memory not only contains an entirely *im*-personal element, it is in principle impossible for one to accomplish anything regarding language (invention, “communication,” and so on) in isolation. Indeed, one cannot escape employing something akin to what Karl Marx calls the “general intellect”—those shared capacities that set the conditions for one’s thought, and that one must exhibit tremendous audacity to ignore when claiming one’s intellectual accomplishments bear no relation to (or dependency upon) a multitude of others and their intense cognitive labors.

The Occupy Movement’s practice of the “human microphone” or “mic-check” provides a concrete image with which to think or imagine the production of discursive memory and its inherently shared quality. The function of the human microphone is to amplify the words of a single speaker (or small number of speakers) by having an assembly or crowd repeat the first speaker’s words in unison and/or in sequential waves. This way, an assembly can magnify a speaker’s voice without the use of electronic amplification, a technique similar to that employed by orators from the ancient world or cheerleaders at contemporary sporting events. The initial speaker signals that the process is ready to begin by shouting “Mic-check!” until the audience responds in unison, and

then they speak slowly, one sentence, or even one sentence fragment¹⁵ at a time while the audience repeats their words (and where small changes quite often sneak in).



Fig. 1. Occupy Wall Street Mic-Check.

Activists not only use this practice for the purpose of relaying information during General Assembly meetings, but also for “disrupting”¹⁶ events where speakers are conveying

¹⁵ I find it interesting that when an Occupy mic-check is taking place that the short, often fragmented bursts of speech that one speaks or hears often resemble the form of rapid-fire microblogging that one finds on Twitter.

¹⁶ Regarding the “disruptive” practice of mic-checking speakers in public venues, PJ Rey argues that:

Occupiers are trying to demonstrate—through the very performance of this act—that ‘free speech’ is not evenly distributed. The point is that only the 1 percent ever find themselves at the podium. The 99 percent are left to fill the seats in the audience, and, if

messages contrary to the “platform” of the Occupy Movement—that is, advocating policies that benefit the financial and political elite (“the 1%”) as opposed to the general population (“the 99%”). President Barack Obama, Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich, and numerous others have all had speeches suddenly interrupted by an Occupy mic-check, and as a testament to the rhetorical force of this practice, recent legislation has been passed/updated that makes this act of dissent a potential federal offense under certain circumstances.¹⁷

However, how does this activist strategy supply an image with which to think the discursive production and/or shared quality of memory? Imagine someone curious about the Occupy Movement deciding to participate in a bank march. Perhaps they have only a vague sense of indignation regarding the financial practices of Bank of America, Chase Bank, or Wells Fargo, but they decide to tag along and see what all the fuss is about. Regardless of his or her degree of knowledge, though, the burgeoning activist comes into

they are lucky, they may have a chance to . . . line up behind the mic for a few brief seconds in the spotlight. This is, of course, because the opportunity to speak and be heard is inextricable from issues of wealth and power . . . [Therefore] [t]he primary purpose of Occupy’s use of the human microphone at public speaking events is not to disrupt, but to be heard. It is not an assault on free speech but a tactic for obtaining it. (N.p.)

¹⁷ The “Federal Restricted Buildings and Grounds Improvement Act of 2011” or H.R. 347 (recently updated in 2012) effectively states, for example, that mic-checking an event where someone under Secret Service protection is in attendance, or disrupting a building where federal government business is taking place, is potentially a federal offense. See the ACLU website for more details (www.aclu.org).

the Occupied territory (or “re-territory”¹⁸) of the bank’s exterior grounds with a pre-existing archive of language, and thus is already framing the world according to specific discourses and truths. As the activist in question shuffles around the picket line, however, suddenly a shout goes up and a mic-check begins. The newly-minted activist repeats the words and finds him- or herself uttering statements about CEO bonuses, problematic foreclosures, the funding of immigrant detention centers, bail-outs with taxpayer money, Occupy slogans, and so on. The activist perhaps now no longer has only an ambiguous sense of outrage but an increasingly concrete one—being subjectivated by and beginning to assimilate new rhetorics, the content of his or her discursive archive has the possibility of being rewritten. He or she began the bank march with an archival “memory” and potentially ended it with what Foucault calls *counter-memory*, a new mode of framing the truths of the world, not only those from the past but those of the “present” as well.

¹⁸ In contrast to occupied “territories,” which are sites claimed and demarcated in order to be controlled (say, for military purposes), for Deleuze and Guattari, “deterritorialization”/“reterritorialization” indicates when a site, event, or concept has its demarcations and property-lines broken down/redrawn. Thus, given the way that the Occupy Movement re-claims space, attempts to break up regimes of control, and institutes modes of thought, it seems appropriate to call Occupied zones “(re)territories.”



Fig. 2. Occupy Wall Street Mic-Check (2).

Moreover, when participating in the mic-check, the burgeoning activist explicitly *repeated* the words of an other, a simple gesture that reveals something profound about memory as a shared, discursively-constituted archive. Granted, educators have long employed repetition as a strategy for getting memories to stick, as when someone wants to “learn something by heart” in order to take a test or play an instrument. But reflection upon the repetition involved in a mic-check or similar practices like school-lesson recitation or prayer-repetition can reveal how language-use itself (which includes thought and invention) is dependent upon linguistic repetition. For in contemplating how the activist in the example above perhaps came to concretize her or his indignation, one can see how this event came about through repeating the words of others. But rather than suggesting that the activist above is merely “unoriginal” or incapable of thinking on his or her own, what this example more profoundly suggests is that all words and all

thoughts, and in turn, all inventive intellectual endeavors, are the result of sharing and repeating language. In other words, one's discursive memory is the result of *iterability*, as Jacques Derrida would say, and the practice of the mic-check and related strategies provides an image with which to think this complex thought, revealing the fundamental dependency that thinking, "communicating," and inventing subjects have on one another.

As Diane Davis points out, "[a]ll signifying utterances are defined . . . by their capacity to be ripped from one context and remixed or repurposed in another: a sign that could only be used once would not be a sign" (*Inessential* 160). What Davis' observation here entails, therefore, is that even the most seemingly "original" thoughts require repeating thoughts that came before them, and moreover, that "even what is said only once, only here and only now, is made possible by its repeatability, which is to say by its impurity" (160). In other words, not only is language inescapably shared and repeated/repeatable, but this entails that "[t]he speaking subject is already an effect of iterability and repeatability—that is, a kind of imitation or simulation" (160). So whenever a subject speaks, writes, or types, that subject is inescapably repeating (and is dependent upon, is recalling) the words and thoughts of others; even when one produces a linguistic neologism or innovative description, others can only celebrate its novel quality because it involves the repetition of something recognizable, and is itself repeatable and/or shareable. Thus, the human microphone is not simply an isolated activist practice, but an image for thinking the inescapable repeatability and share-ability of language and thought, especially because when enough subjects repeat a thought, the "louder" (the more influential) that it becomes. And perhaps most significantly, if

language is repeatable and shareable at its core, then no *individual* is the absolute creative origin of his or her thoughts, nor can s/he justifiably lay claim to them as property.¹⁹

Indeed, as Derrida argues, “every discourse is *bricoleur*” (“Structure” 285), meaning that no matter what vocabularies or discourses one employs, one must inescapably borrow from and “communicate” in relation to others (through a series of recollections). This notion stands in stark contrast to what Derrida, following Claude Lévi-Strauss, calls an “engineer,” or what I would call an “entrepreneur.” As Derrida explains, “[t]he engineer . . . should be the one to construct the totality of his language, syntax, and lexicon. In this sense the engineer is a myth. A subject who supposedly would be the absolute origin of his own discourse and supposedly would construct it ‘out of nothing’” (285). Derrida thus disparages the notion of a self-sufficient “engineer” or “entrepreneur” that supposedly creates from nothing without regard for the discursive archive/memory upon which he or she is dependent (or the practice of human microphone in which he or she is engaged). And yet this “theological” illusion that one is

¹⁹ In *The Methodical Memory*, Sharon Crowley argues that the Modernist notion that self-sufficient “individuals” are the unique origins of their thoughts and that “knowledge [is] a commodity that [can] be borrowed or stolen” (164), is a problematic assumption that underlies the pedagogical strategies of Current-Traditional Rhetoric as well as serves to reinforce “the professional hierarchy that currently obtains in the American academy” (139).

the absolute origin of one's thoughts and innovations remains the basis for much of contemporary political and socio-economic rhetoric.²⁰

By contrast, if one rejects the notion of “an origin, . . . an absolute *archia*” (286), recognizing the fundamental dependency or “relationality” among subjects, and humanity's shared discursive archive, the door is opened to radically rethinking ethics, politics, and economics. For the inherent interdependency of language-users on one another, the notion that subjectivity is in part an effect of the archive of human discourse, stands in stark contrast to the Enlightenment or neoliberal notion that subjects are “individuals” who *create* spontaneously and free from the influence of others. And yet it is precisely this phantasy that allows one to ignore one's dependency upon the sharing of discursive memory and its inventive force, allowing one in turn to justify accumulating and retaining vast amounts of Capital and property without acknowledging the productive contributions of those who have labored (intellectually and communicatively) on one's behalf.

THE MASK AND THE FIST: IMAGES FOR PRODUCING MEMORY

Alongside discourse, another critical component in the rhetorical production of memory—and thus partially constitutive of subjectivity—is the image, and one can conceive of images not only in relation to specific media (for instance, posters and

²⁰ One outstanding rhetorical example where human subjectivity is posited as an absolute origin is the contemporary political *topos* “We Built This,” a slogan that although containing the collective pronoun “we” evinces a staunch individualism and the contention that the “self” is a source of creative genesis.

Internet memes), but as shorthand for the sensory manifold of perception-recollection itself. Henri Bergson argues that perception-recollection is composed of a flowing assemblage (or “duration”) of images, and that these images are always-already “memory” (*Matter* viii; xii). In support of his contention that perception-recollection is “imagistic,” Bergson states: “we imagine perception to be a kind of photographic view of things . . . [b]ut is it not obvious that the photograph, if photograph there be, is already taken, already developed in the very heart of things and at all points of space?” (31). What Bergson means here by saying that perception-recollection is “photographic,” is that the subject’s perception/recollection is produced through sequentially “capturing” or “contracting” slices of the ceaseless unfolding of material reality, and by integrating those sliced images into itself. Thus, the “photo-image” in perception-recollection does not *represent* a more fundamental reality—it *is* reality, the world of a given subject. And yet, perception-recollection’s integrative movement lags behind the becoming of materiality (what Deleuze calls “pure immanence”), and there is thus an interval “between matter itself and our conscious perception of matter” (27)—which entails that even the most “immediate” of experiences are already memory. Hence, Bergson contends that “in truth every perception is already memory. Practically we perceive only the past, the pure present being the invisible progress of the past gnawing into the future” (194). And likewise, by setting his sights on how perception-recollection is rhetorically produced “from behind” (temporally speaking), Bergson points out that, “there is no perception which is not full of memories. With the immediate and present data of our senses we mingle a thousand details out of our past experience” (24). So not only is the

“pure present” contaminated by being a memory-image (one compressed/integrated into a subjectivity that lags behind materiality’s unfolding), but what is taken as the “present” is not even possible without its combination with past images.

Though challenging, I outline Bergson’s theories of memory here for a couple of reasons. The first is that they provide perspicacious insight into the inherently rhetorical nature of perception and recollection, for if not only the subject’s past, but its “present” are composed of memory-images, this means that both modes of time are rhetorically circumscribed (as images). I bring up Bergson’s theories of memory as well because as “general” theories of memory linked to images, they can aid one in closely analyzing some very specific images in their capacity to produce memory (or politically charged “counter-memory”)—and these theories in turn guide one toward understanding why W.J.T. Mitchell maintains that “the human subject [is] a being constituted by both language and imaging” (*Picture 24*).

Following Bergson’s more general theories of the imagistic nature of perception-recollection, I will demonstrate how specific images produce memory by analyzing some cases from recent occupation movements where images work to cultivate “counter-memory” (or productions of subjectivity that induce politically-charged action). The first image that I will employ as a springboard for investigating memory’s imagistic constitution is the most famous connected to the Occupy Movement, the Guy Fawkes mask. Many are familiar with the Guy Fawkes mask due to the film *V for Vendetta* (2005), where the protagonist “V” fights the totalitarian forces of a dystopian, corporation-dominated world with the help of Evey Hammond (Natalie Portman).

Viewers who remember the film and its anti-corporate message therefore perhaps imagine themselves becoming “V” when donning the Fawkes mask, snuggling up to Portman, and saving the world from capitalist excesses.²¹ Moreover, given Fawkes’ desire to destroy the existing social order within the film, along with his abusive treatment of Hammond, the mask likewise carries a series of negative connotations and recalls for many the existence of those who would deign to threaten free markets, national security, and “freedom” as such.

²¹ Slavoj Žižek argues that the mask “confronts us directly with the abyss of the Other-Thing, with the Neighbor in its uncanny dimension. The very covering-up of the face obliterates a protective shield, so that the Other-Thing stares at us directly” (*Living 2*). In other words, by covering one’s face, one harnesses the rhetorical force inherent in highlighting one’s status as an object, as an unknowable and unpredictable Other, and as a Thing with which others cannot empathize. Hence, in making one’s face “forgotten,” one becomes increasingly unsettling to others and simultaneously becomes-legion by becoming part of an “anonymous” swarm.



Fig. 3. Hacker Group “Anonymous” sporting Guy Fawkes masks.

However, there exists a less familiar genealogy of Guy Fawkes’ image that involves opposition to “tyranny” and is implicated in the production of counter-memory. In 1605, Guy Fawkes, a Catholic (along with thirteen co-conspirators), plotted to blow up the English House of Lords because he considered it a stronghold of Protestant oppression, and although the attempt was unsuccessful, authorities tortured Fawkes and sentenced him to hanging, drawing, and quartering in retribution (though Fawkes committed suicide before authorities carried out the sentence) (“Guy” N.p.). Many commemorate the “Gunpowder Plot” to this day, often with fireworks and the burning of effigies (typically of figures that have drawn the English citizenry’s ire such as the Pope). But perhaps most significantly, many recall the Gunpowder Plot through a simple rhyme directly connected to the themes of memory and forgetting: “Remember, remember, the fifth of November / Gunpowder, treason, and plot / I see no reason why gunpowder,

treason / Should ever be forgot” (N.p.). The great irony in this particular poetic rhyme, however, is that “forgetting,” or what Vivian describes as the overcoming of “our own invented or received perceptions of former times, people, and events” (54), is precisely what has happened in the case of Guy Fawkes. For whereas many remembered Fawkes as a treasonous monster for generations, his memory has metamorphosed, transforming him into the quintessential anti-totalitarian hero. This is despite Fawkes’ desire to employ violence and his support for the authoritarianism of the Catholic Church—which is precisely why Mitchell calls “the grinning visage of Guy Fawkes” “a singularly awkward and inappropriate icon of a nonviolent revolution” (“Image” 9). However, regardless of its “inappropriateness,” by wearing or deploying the Guy Fawkes mask/image with its (for many) now positive connotations, subjects unknowingly engage in an act of protest against the traditional version of Fawkes’ legacy. The mask and its contemporary meaning have therefore produced a counter-memory, which is especially significant given that social movements, rebellions, and revolutions are often closely bound to “forgetting,” or even to rewriting, the past. Yet, on the other hand, for those who view the Fawkes mask and recall instead a threat, for instance, to the “American Way of Life,” one can likewise say that the image possesses the power to reify the negative memory associatively bound to Fawkes’ legacy.

Another way by which one can provide evidence for the imagistic production of memory via Guy Fawkes’ visage appears when looking at artist Shepard Fairey’s reprise of his famous Barack Obama “Hope” poster. For although Fairey conceived the image as an appeal to President Obama, implicitly calling on him to support the Occupy

Movement and its values, the image appears to deconstruct, particularly in relation to its later versions, producing counter-memory in the process.



Fig. 4. Shepard Fairey's Occupy "Hope" Poster²²

²² As one can see from the Fairey poster, Occupy activists often wear "hoodie" sweatshirts in tandem with Guy Fawkes masks. Initially, this helped them to achieve greater anonymity, but the hoodie soon took on a counter-memorial role in the wake of the Trayvon Martin shooting on February 26th, 2012, in Sanford, Florida. In order to express their disdain at the fact that the immediate arrest of Martin's killer, George Zimmerman, did not take place (due to so-called "Stand Your Ground" legislation) after what many considered a racially-motivated shooting, thousands donned hoodies like the one worn by Martin the night he was slain, and marched and rallied across the country. Thereafter, Martin's death counter-memorialized the image of the hoodie into one of mourning and racial struggle. That is, just as images can produce memory, memory in turn can rhetorically reproduce images.

To begin (again), consider Bergson's supposition that "[p]erception is never a mere contact of the mind with the object present; it is impregnated with memory-images which complete it as they interpret it" (170). So as one views the Occupy "Hope" poster, one likely recalls the Obama "Hope" poster as well, and in fact, one could not even perceive the full rhetorical force of the Occupy poster as one does without "completing" it with one's memories of the Obama poster. That is, memory-images of the Obama poster work to enthymemically produce/"complete" the image of the Occupy poster; a memory from the past thereby produces memory in the "present." However, in the current case, this memory-production has an interesting effect. For in reminding viewers of the Obama poster, re-deploying its rhetoric, one perhaps arrives at the question: Has the Guy Fawkes image supplanted the Obama image as the image of "Hope," and if so, what productions of counter-memory does this event entail?

Not surprisingly, many participants in the Occupy Movement report being disenchanted with President Obama, for example, due to his approval of drone strikes in Pakistan and Yemen and for his support of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which many contend opens the door to the indefinite penal detention of American citizens. By contrast, Occupiers almost universally consider themselves as anti-war and pro-civil liberties, so it is little surprise that some asked Fairey to remove any reference to the President from his poster, leaving only the Guy Fawkes mask as the image of hope. Thus it seems that through expunging the President, there is a production of counter-memory through the resulting image, for it reifies the sentiment that in

contrast to the excitement (and hope) regarding the Obama presidency in 2008, many progressives are now left with the impression that not only has the President come up short of his expectations, but any hope left in elected officials (or representative government itself) has almost completely vanished. In other words, through images like the revised Occupy “Hope” poster, fuel is provided for a counter-memorial narrative with significant political force, just so long as it is viewed by those who ascribe the Fawkes mask a series of positive connotations.

With regard to political force specifically, before proceeding to another case study for memory’s production via an image, I want to reframe the discussion by considering more closely the relationship between the production of memory via images and politically-charged activity (or how the incitement to act by images is evidence of a rhetorical production of memory). Bergson argues that memory is a (conscious and unconscious) vehicle for mobilization, and that the images of perception-recollection are always framed in order to induce movement. Along these lines, Bergson maintains that “we must never forget the utilitarian character of our mental functions, which are essentially turned toward action” (*Matter* xvii), and he asserts that memory-images only “survive” if one can utilize them in this particular way (70). In fact, he claims that memory “no longer *represents* our past to us, it *acts* it; and if it still deserves the name of memory, it is not because it conserves bygone images, but because it prolongs their useful effect into the present moment” (93). In other words, rather than “subjectively” representing a more fundamental reality, for Bergson, memory *suspends* non-representational perception-recollections from the past and interjects them into one’s

movements and “present” perceptions (which is comprised of memory-images). Thus, images not only have the power to produce memory by stitching themselves to recollections or by rhetorically producing “present” perceptions, the influence of images persuasively compels one’s bodily movement like “a hypnotizer who makes a suggestion” (174).

In order to continue showing how images have the power to rhetorically produce memory, and can in turn induce action/movement, I want to look now at the International Solidarity Fist. Like the Guy Fawkes mask, the Solidarity Fist has a rich genealogy, which is not surprising given the prominent role that hands play in the history of human art. One can trace Solidarity Fist imagery back to at least 1917 (appearing during industrial worker struggles), but it was not until 1968 that the Fist became an icon used in isolation, appearing on posters to oppose the arrest of the “Oakland Seven” (conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War draft) (Cushing N.p.). More recently, the International Solidarity Fist reappeared and circulated widely during labor protests in Wisconsin (2011), where thousands of angry public employees such as teachers and fire fighters occupied the state capitol to oppose Governor Scott Walker’s efforts to strip union workers of their rights to collectively bargain.



Fig. 5. Wisconsin Solidarity Fist.

How is it, though, that an image like the Wisconsin Fist produces memory (or counter-memory) and how does that production incite action? For one, the Fist image aids in producing a counter-memorial “narrative” regarding the situation of organized labor in Wisconsin. That is, contrary to narratives that proclaim workers are being greedy and should take individual responsibility for their welfare rather than collectively bargaining for state funds, the Fist image calls on workers to unite in solidarity across the state (consider here the symmetry between the respective shapes of the Solidarity Fist and the state of Wisconsin). Moreover, even though recent workers’ struggles in Wisconsin have fared poorly, resulting in a loss of collective bargaining rights while Governor Walker remains in office following a recall election, the memory of these struggles remains encapsulated (*latent*) within the Fist image. Thus, when potential future struggles erupt, the Fist image perhaps has the power to productively re-infuse subjects with

memory of the 2011 state-house occupation, inserting them into what Bergson might call the “memory of the present” in order to incite action.

By contrast, it is also worth mentioning how Fist imagery has long been associated with Left-leaning causes, and therefore negative depictions of said causes as well. Indeed, for many the Fist recalls little more than the specters of socialism/communism and the cry of lazy unemployed rabble-rousers, so in cases such as these, the image serves to recall the justice inherent in preventing the success of those with the audacity to raise the Fist in defiance. But regardless, whether one considers how the Fist image transformed perception-recollections of the “present” during the Wisconsin occupation via counter-memorial “narrative,” how the image contains a memory of state-house struggle that might induce movement in the future, or merely serves as a reminder of Leftist causes that need continually squashed, it reveals how images like the Solidarity Fist have the power to produce memory and memory-as-action.

Furthermore, images not only have the power to produce memory, but the power to produce *forgetting*, which is just as vital. This is not only because every production of memory requires forgetting in order for it to take the rhetorical form it has, but because, as Nietzsche reminds his readers, “[f]orgetting is essential to action of any kind” (*Untimely* 62). Unfortunately, quite often images induce an “unproblematic forgetting” in the form of obliviousness (*Breaking* 184-185), such as is the case with scores of propaganda posters that, for instance, cloak the economic/political motives for war behind patriotism and nationalism. In cases such as these, powers employ images so as to produce a subject complicit with imperial violence and unchecked accumulation. But on

the other hand, an image's productive forgetting might also strive to serve the ends of peace and economic justice. With regard to such possible forgettings, consider the following example of the International Solidarity Fist as deployed by Occupy Oakland prior to a General Strike, more specifically, an attempt to disrupt activity at Oakland's various ports. Here, the Solidarity Fist(s) framed in striking blood-red and jet black attempt to persuade one to resist and "break free," particularly with regard to the bonds of debt and Capital. One might therefore aver that this image of "breaking free" or "shattering" bears a significant relation to "forgetting" as a productive jettisoning of the past, in this case, one dominated by the financial elite as encapsulated in the phrase "Shut Down the 1%." But likewise, especially provided the negative associations that many ascribe to the Solidarity Fist, one might also contend that the "forgetting" at issue is dangerous, as the image's color-scheme and Fists arguably efface a history of ethically abhorrent actions undertaken by certain nominally Left-leaning (though ultimately fascist) governments.



Fig. 5. Occupy Oakland Calls for a General Strike.

Indeed, on the one hand, the Occupy Oakland poster might involve mere amnesia toward the past, as it deploys images and colors that, for many, recall the violent attempt by certain fascist governments to forcibly install communitarianism. But on the other hand, perhaps those who designed the poster are fully aware of these events, and if this is so, another (Third) reading presents itself linked to what Nietzsche calls *affirmative forgetting*. Davis describes said forgetting as “the dis/covering and radical shedding . . . of past/present foundations that leaves one wide open to previously unthought potentialities” (*Breaking* 166), so perhaps the foundation that the image attempts to shed is the history of fascist attempts to install “communitarian” political economies. However, if an *affirmative* forgetting is truly at work here, this would not at all mean

relegating such histories to oblivion,²³ because affirmative forgetting involves recognizing the existence of a troubling event or state of affairs, while performatively resisting its continued influence in the “present” or future (whether by rhetorical “excision” or related means).²⁴ Or as Nietzsche so elegantly puts it, “[by] confront[ing] our inherited and hereditary nature with our knowledge, and through a new, stern discipline combat[ing] our inborn heritage and implant[ing] in ourselves a new habit, a new instinct, a second nature, so that our first nature withers away” (76). Thus, maybe the Occupy Oakland image demands a confrontation with those radically problematic forms of “communitarianism” that today’s society has inherited from the past, demands a new understanding of them, and expresses the “instinct” toward new communitarian modes of existence such that the old forms wither and fall away. Such is perhaps the incredible power of “forgetting” contained in this specific image, and within the image as such.

²³ In the case of the Occupy Oakland image, it is worth mentioning that in contrast to obliviousness, the image actually evokes an intriguing genealogy of historical events, such as those “great General Strikes in the Russian Empire that began in 1896 and ended in the tremendous General Strike of 1905” (Spivak 9).

²⁴ If one reads images like the General Strike poster as productive of “forgetting,” one reason why this is significant is that it may signal an attempted reversal. Participants in Occupy and other class-oriented movements often espouse the idea that they have been forgotten by the financial and political elites, and that these elites operate by the Nineteenth-century slogan: “Gain wealth, forgetting all but self.” Thus, the productive forgetting and reversal at issue in the Strike poster perhaps involves a desire to “forget” those elites, to not recognize their power, just as the “1%” are purported to have forgotten the “99%.”

SINGULAR RHETORICITY: THE FORGOTTEN POWER OF AFFECT

Subjectivity is to a significant degree not only an effect of memory but also of forgetting. Moreover, forgetting and memory are, in the words of Michael Bernard-Donals, “not opposites but counterparts . . . forgetfulness is not the absence of, but rather an integral element of memory; and all memory is shot through with moments of forgetfulness” (41). Thus, forgetting and memory are inexorably bound up with one another even as they remain discernible, which is in turn why Vivian critically observes: “forgetting comprises an essentially productive aspect of memory rather than its unfortunate repression or erosion” (126). For instance, this is to say that subjectivities are partially the effect of “forgotten” and irretrievable affects as well as memorable rhetorical appeals, and this is important because as Pruchnic and Lacey point out, “one of the most important aspects of rhetorical memory” that has disappeared throughout history is a “focus on the affective capacities of humans” (482). Moreover, as Pruchnic and Lacey’s own analysis links rhetorical memory to the social and political nature of affects, I will argue that an attunement to “forgotten” affective sociality reveals that persuasion—along with the identifications upon which it is supposedly based—is preceded and exceeded by a more fundamental singular or “rhetorical” relation between existents (one with significant political ramifications).

Indeed, typically, or at least traditionally, in rhetorical studies many consider persuasion/subjectivity’s production as necessarily dependent upon identification, or the memory of shared properties and projects. This position achieves its most famous formulation in the work of Kenneth Burke, who contends that “[y]ou persuade a man

only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his” (55). In other words, it is only by showing someone that you are like them, getting them to recognize/remember something familiar about you, that you can convince them to do anything. This supposition suggests, for example, that for activists or whomever to convince others of the legitimacy of their socio-political perspectives or to engage in collective actions, they must first convince others that they share a common cause, background, or values.

The reason Burke contends that identification is necessary for persuasion is that he argues for the distinctiveness of bodies/nervous systems, and for him because bodies/nervous systems are distinctive or ontologically “individuated,” they require rhetoric to bridge the gap between them, thereby aligning their movements. Along these lines, Burke writes: “[i]dentification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity” (22). For Burke, then, living beings are always-already fundamentally separated from one another, moving to the beat of different drummers, so they need rhetorics to symbolically syncopate them so that they can move in tandem—which requires that they share the memory of a common property or project with others. In what follows, though, I want to challenge (or rather, supplement) the Burkean model by asking whether identification as the memory of shared projects and properties is necessary for persuasion and rhetorically spurring subjects to action. For what if “forgotten” affective/rhetorical relations are just as capable?

Imagine marching in a protest rally with hundreds, even thousands, of activists around you (whether they are civil rights advocates, Tea Partiers, *indignatios*, etc., makes no difference here). By identifying them as compatriots and recalling the cause one shares with them, it seems Burke's observation stands regarding the need for identification due to the primacy of division. Then, suddenly, the movement of the crowd lurches and you find your body changing course as well, before you are even aware, before you remember being asked to do so. The crowd rolls diagonally like a storm, and you are but one particle. Imagine a group of police or military personnel in riot gear appearing on the scene. You abruptly find yourself running with a small band of activists before anyone says a word, and you leap to protect another protester (or perhaps even a police or military officer) from a projectile or tear gas cloud. Amid the blinding chaos, is one's "selfless" activity and the partial production of one's subjectivity that it implies based upon identification as the recollection of commonality, or is something radically different going on here (especially when one moves to protect someone with whom one is *not* identified)?



Fig. 7. – Occupy Wall Street Activists Struggle Against Police.

Following the lead of Diane Davis, I argue that persuasion (and the partial productions of subjectivity it entails) does not of necessity require identification as the memory of shared properties or projects. For what is at stake in the examples above are instances of a more fundamental affective or “rhetorical” relation that precedes and exceeds a memory of similitude. Indeed, in such cases, one finds oneself responding, whether moving with the crowd, fleeing, protecting others, and so on, “before” memory. And if this is the case, these events deal a serious blow to any contention regarding the necessity of Burkean identification or the memory of shared goals in persuasion, and as Davis shows, they challenge Burke’s argument regarding the ontological or primary “division” that supposedly exists between (singular) bodies.

As Davis notes, “persuasion frequently succeeds without presenting itself to cognitive scrutiny” (*Inessential 2*), and this occurrence has everything to do with affect or

“the affective dimension of memory,” which as Pruchnic and Lacey note, is a “pivotal component of subjectivity” to accompany those of discourse and images (486). Affects are chemical, behavioral, and other empirical forces transmitted and shared between (singular) bodies in instances where an other compels a subject’s activity (before any subject/other split), but where no memorable trace of explicit persuasion remains. Affects are therefore a characteristic variety of what Bernard-Donals calls “forgetful memory.”

But how is it that affects operate so stealthily, without producing any memory of the initially persuasive event? As Davis explains, this is so because before there is identification and persuasion in the Burkean sense, based on recollection of shared projects and properties through rhetorical means, there is first “a more radically generalized rhetoricity, an affectability or persuadability that precedes and exceeds symbolic intervention” (19). In other words, before there are memorable rhetorical exchanges, one is always-already open/exposed to persuasion and affection. One’s (singular) bodily existence is characterized by an inherent suggestibility, and this suggestibility entails an “identification” with “others” prior to any subject/object split, undermining the Burkean need for symbolic rhetorics to bridge the chasm between existents. For indeed, if “identification” as a non-declinable affective tie to others is always-already in operation, and one must therefore *dis*-identify from the network of (singular) life in order to exist as a subject, one must entirely reverse the Burkean schema. For here “identification” and the affective, “rhetorical,” production of subjectivity would not only precede and exceed memory, but any identification of shared goals or properties enabled through symbolic appeal.

Thus, it is appropriate that Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen calls the event wherein persuasion by an/other takes place before any subject/object split, before any traction by memory, “persuasion without a rhetorician” (71), since it occurs via affects that an “other” transmits non-consciously, and likewise, that “one” receives non-consciously (before there is an “other” or a “one”). For instance, there is often no single rhetorician-subject who appeals to activists to tell them to change course along a march, to huddle up as a team, to flee or face police, but rather, a shared production of subjectivity and movement that simultaneously belongs to *everyone/no one* (Heidegger’s *Das Man*). This is why Borch-Jacobsen argues that affection entails “a radical *forgetting of the other*” (50), because when suggestion takes place via the non-declinable rhetoricity that structures one’s existence, it appears as though one’s movements originate from within oneself, even though they were transmitted by an/other and have no ultimate origin. One thus wipes the other out without realizing as much, and is thereby able to preserve the phantasy of “self”-mastery and sovereignty. And it is likewise this “forgetting” of the other that blinds one to the existence of *singularity*.

In physics, Davis notes, the concept of singularity describes the region of a black hole where gravitational forces become so great as to perplex scientific/mathematical description. What is important here, though, is that singularities can provide one an image to think about bodies without reducing them to the notion of a distinct, isolated, or atomized unit. For just as (naked) black hole singularities exert a pull on everything around them, and constitute themselves as masses by everything they have taken in, singular bodies draw in their surroundings and are constituted by them such that “a rather

astonishing condition of indistinction announces itself” between any singular body and another (*Inessential* 24). So whereas “individuals” are discrete, atomized entities that are wholly “self”-motivated and uniquely responsible for their own activities, singularities are open to the outside and to others, and their “becomings” are inexorably bound up with (and produced through) the movements of others. In fact, singularities *are* the others with whom they exist in proximity and are responsible to others for their very being. What this means, then, is that there are no “individuals” living completely detached from one another, for instance, accumulating wealth and power wholly on their own, working or producing or inventing wholly on their own. Instead, there exist singularities networked together such that they produce wealth together, think and create together (“in common”), without ever existing in isolation. Singular existence is therefore constituted by a ceaselessly “forgotten,” yet inescapable, “persuadability,” which entails that *no one is capable of anything alone*—and the material existence of life is networked.²⁵

²⁵ Hardt and Negri’s remarks on the two types of “multitude” are quite instructive here:

The first multitude is *ontological* and we could not conceive our social being without it. . . . The second multitude is *political*, and it will require a political project to bring it into being on the basis of these emerging conditions. These two multitudes, however, although conceptually distinct, are not really separable. If the multitude were not already latent and implicit in our social being, we could not even imagine it as a political project; and, similarly, we can only hope to realize it today because it already exists as a real potential. The multitude, then, when we put the two together, has a strange, double temporality: always-already and not-yet. (221-222)



Fig 8. Occupy Wall Street as Singular Network.

In espousing the concept of singularity in contrast to that of the atomized “individual,” one therefore accomplishes two significant feats: first, one supports the idea that one can persuade others, (partially) produce subjectivity and movement, “forgetfully,” without conscious awareness, and second, singularity challenges what Davis calls the “phantasm of the free and willing agent” (128), that is, the “self”-sufficient *individual* who can act without any prior affection by others as a “divine” self-causing cause (a *creator*). Hence, as in my earlier analysis of the discursive production and sharing of memory, the concept of singularity opens the door to a new ethics, politics, and economics by enacting a challenge to the Modernist/neoliberal ideal of a sovereign subject who can get rich on their own or accomplish anything in total isolation. Indeed, singularity entails that individual (“moral”) responsibility is a *myth*, such that no

one can achieve what they have without existing within the vast network of singularities that affectively/“rhetorically” produce them, constantly remaking their subjectivities, and from which they are drawing their productive powers. Hence, the critical importance of recalling the “forgotten” power of affect within today’s society, for it is a question of how one can cultivate the ground for new socio-economic and political relations that posit that the production of material wealth and knowledge requires networks of inescapably interrelated movement.

“SOLIDARITY OF THE SHAKEN”: FORGETTING AND REMEMBERING TRAUMA

As a final entrée into investigating the rhetorical production of memory and forgetting as constitutive components of subjectivity, I turn now to trauma. For although trauma does not involve “obviously” rhetorical forces like discourse or images, it implicates these forces in tandem, which is one of the reasons why Vivian writes that:

[e]ven the visceral transparency of memories related to personal trauma
(which ostensibly preserve raw, unmediated experience) occludes the fact
that such memories may well exist in a state of translation, migration, or
even comprehensive reconstruction from one locus of memory to another.

(125)

In other words, because traumatic “experiences” are constantly de-territorialized and re-translated, that is, “reconstructed” via discourse, images, and so on, trauma is an event tightly bound to rhetorical productions of memory and forgetting. Slavoj Žižek writes that “[t]he essence of trauma is precisely that it is too horrible to be remembered, to be

integrated into our symbolic universe. All we have to do is to mark repeatedly the trauma as such” (*For They* 272-273). Indeed, when trauma strikes, the subject records the event, and yet cannot consciously recall it; it therefore disrupts the subject’s behavior and psychical processes, but in a way that is inaccessible. This is why one can only “mark” the trauma, taking note of its occurrence without any access to its specifics. Thus it is becoming clearer why Jenny Edkins contends that “traumatic memory is not the same as everyday memory” (xiii).

Traumatic memory has its own unique characteristics, especially given its relation to “forgetting.” Edkins begins by pointing out that “[e]vents that give rise to what we categorize today as symptoms of trauma generally involve force and violence” (3); that is, in some sense what constitutes trauma’s “rhetorical” power is the “persuasiveness” of material impact. Moreover, “[w]itnessing violence done to others and surviving can seem to be as traumatic as suffering brutality oneself” (4). So the memory (and “forgetting”) of trauma haunt not only the sufferer but the witness, reproducing the subjectivities of both as *marked*. As Žižek suggests above, when trauma makes its mark it can profoundly alter a subject’s life, but without this persuasive/productive spur initially arising in conscious experience. Psychoanalysts call this haunting return of “forgotten” trauma *Nachträglichkeit*, and as Thomas Rickert explains:

Nachträglichkeit describes a structure whereby an event occurs, is forgotten or remembered in a particularly benign manner, and remains as such until a later time, when, through the accumulation of new memories

and understandings that reach a tipping point, the earlier memory resurfaces. (23)

Though the earlier experience may not resurface at all, it continues to affect the subject's life in an unfortunate way. Traumas may be "forgotten" temporarily or permanently, but they have a profound power to produce the subjectivity of the subject.

The (often hidden) markings of traumatic violence and its admixture of memorable and "forgotten" effects are quite varied, and can affect a wide range of subjects engaged in a number of different activities. For example, after brutalization by police/military personnel, seeing fellow activists arrested and thrown in jail, or verbal excoriation by family and "friends," many Occupiers decided to hang up their bullhorns, signs, and Guy Fawkes masks. This is not surprising, though, because as Occupy Chicago's "Trauma and Healing" pamphlet explains, although "[i]n comparison to rape, [witnessing] mass murder, or other terrible things, street demonstration is relatively less traumatic . . . people can be severely [a]ffected by imprisonment, gassing, beatings by police, betrayal, or even unexpected behavior by comrades or the state" (N.p.).



Fig. 9. Dorli Rainey Pepper-Sprayed at Occupy Seattle.²⁶

Indeed, in keeping with the image of Occupy protesters as a “non-violent army,” many who participated in the movement reported having the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a psychological condition commonly experienced by combatants during times of war. In fact, even this writer can admit to having nightmares and flashbacks, along with waking up in cold sweats during the most intense periods of the movement, unable to forget (or initially process) some of the most troubling things he experienced (See Edkins 1-2).

²⁶ Although it is difficult to say whether or not Rainey herself underwent a trauma in the wake of her pepper-spraying, her case serves as an exemplar of the kinds of experiences (or “non-experiences”) undergone by activists that often did have traumatic effects. Moreover, while being interviewed by Keith Olbermann, Rainey remarks that seeing the picture of her being pepper-sprayed “is really not a good picture to think about” (N.p.), and in multiple interviews, she palpably changes the subject again and again when questioned about how the pepper-spraying continues to affect her.

Along with the characteristic occurrence of events involving force and violence, as well as the psychological struggle to remember them, Edkins contends that a primary feature of trauma is *betrayal* (4). As she explains:

[w]hat we call trauma takes place when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors: when the community of which we considered ourselves members turns against us or when our family is no longer a source of refuge but a site of danger. (4)

As an example of this kind of traumatic betrayal alongside those heart-breaking instances of abuse by parents, caretakers, or spouses, consider that after being set on by riot police, many Occupy activists reported feeling violated, as though their country had betrayed them. The reproduction of their subjectivities occurred through the traumatic realization/recollection that the freedoms of speech and assembly supposedly enshrined in the US Constitution rang achingly hollow. They therefore suddenly found themselves living in a country they once believed safe for free expression, but that now resorted to proto-fascist tactics to subjugate and silence them (a realization about which many marginalized subjects have long been aware). And moreover, in instances such as these where one experiences a breaking down of (contingency within) the social order, Edkins suggests that this occurrence is traumatic because one can no longer “forget” the fact that one has been living a fantasy, that an inherently stable social system is a phantasm (5;12).



Fig. 10. An Occupy Activist Weeps as Others Comfort Him.

However, following in the footsteps of Jacques Lacan, Edkins reminds readers of the betrayal that the production of subjectivity itself requires (14). That is, to become a recognizable/memorable subject at all, to belong to discernible categories of identity, one must always-already “betray” one’s singular existence by employing categories that exceed or fall short of it; in other words, one’s existence can never become isomorphic with rhetorical attempts to articulate it. This is something that subjects would also prefer not to acknowledge due its traumatic nature, since a brush with that for which no category will suffice is radically unsettling, especially if it is one’s “own” being that is depropriating. For instance, Edkins points out that:

If someone is, say, a political activist, there is always the immediate question of whether they are sufficiently involved to count as an activist: don’t activists have to be more committed, to take part in more than just

demonstrations, should they stand for office? On the other hand, are they perhaps more than an activist – does that description do justice to what they are, to their role in the party? There is always a surplus in one direction or the other. However, we choose on the whole to ignore this – to forget the impossibility, and to act as if completeness and closure were possible. We hide the traumatic real and stick with the fantasy we call social reality. (12)

Thus, as rhetorical reproduction transforms the subject throughout its existence, in order to become/remain who it is and to hold that identity in memory, the same subject must “forget” how it exceeds or comes up short of those same categories because one cannot make singular existence commensurate with language/rhetorics—to acknowledge otherwise is traumatic for the subject’s sense of “self.” Indeed, this is why the fantasy of a “self” who fits discernible categories is employed (and singular existence is betrayed)—it protects the subject from a traumatic brush with the ungraspable/a-signifying “structure” of its being.

Finally, just as subjects anxiously cover over the inappropriable structure of their existences with conceptual categories, they approach traumatic events in a similar way; for although one cannot consciously remember such events, the “void” of forgetting is evidence of their occurrence. But this void-presence is unnerving, so subjects scramble to cover it over via a narrative account, or with what Bernard-Donals describes as a “profusion of language” (13). And it is this rhetorical incitement to write in the face of “forgetting” that leads Bernard-Donals to agree with Blanchot that “it is at this point—

‘upon losing what we have to say’, the point of forgetfulness—that writing begins. Forgetfulness is the source of memory” (13). That is, the “forgetting” of trauma is the source of “memory” as narrativization (or the discursive production of subjectivity by the subject).

However, to rhetorically record an encounter that one has always-already “forgotten” is an impossible task, and so it is a task that one can never adequately complete. One is struck with the disturbing sense that no words will ever do, and this is made all the more troubling because even though there is no repressed image to resurface in the case where one has “experienced” world-loss, one’s singular body often ceaselessly undergoes the “forgotten” event’s painful return (thus it constitutes Bernard-Donals’ paradigmatic example of “forgetful memory”). This is also why Deleuze argues that “[w]e do not repeat because we repress, we repress because we repeat” (*Difference* 105). That is, the subject unwittingly attempts to reenact its trauma first, and then must immediately attempt to stifle this painful undertaking. And yet, it is an undertaking that one must take up if one is to heal and “live on,” and so perhaps the attempt to cope with world-loss and “forgetting” in narrative language, to in turn refashion one’s subjectivity, is part of trauma’s “cure” (so long as one recognizes it is a cure that one can never have done with). Indeed, because one is attempting to write an event that one has “forgotten,” and that is of overwhelming magnitude, one will likely have the sense that the event is *de-scribing* itself, as Blanchot puts it (*Writing* 7), that the event is un-writing itself as one attempts to write it. Hence, perhaps the best one can do to cope with traumas of this magnitude and the reproductions of subjectivity that they entail is to, as Edkins explains,

engage both memory and forgetting “by encircling the trauma rather than attempting to gentrify it” (15), thereby keeping the event’s truths forever on-the-way.

Examples of this conception of traumatic world-loss that leap to mind first, of course, involve genocides, wars, famines, and so on. However, there are many examples one could draw from the history of American and global activism, such as civil rights struggles where activists occupied segregated buses and lunch-counters, thereby putting their lives at stake (and for which many gave their lives). And in connection with the contemporary Occupy Movement, allow me to offer up a brief, somewhat indirect example, an image/persona that may help one to imagine the difficulty inherent in writing about trauma and productively narrativizing subjectivity in its wake. Consider Iraq War Veteran and Occupy activist Scott Olsen, who, if anyone deserves the title, one can call a *survivor* of the Occupy Movement.



Fig. 11. Scott Olsen Recovering from Head Trauma.

On October 25th, 2011, during an Occupy event in Oakland, California, as police descended upon protesters, Olsen was shot in the forehead with a tear gas canister (some accounts say a weapons-grade “bean bag” round) which left a nearly three-inch fracture in his skull. Although Olsen has now recovered, ironically²⁷ (and significantly), he was left without the ability to speak for some time, and in interviews after the incident, his ability to speak was obviously labored. As he explained, “[m]y brain was mostly working okay, but I couldn’t get these words out of my mouth, and I had a head-full of words that I wanted to say but I couldn’t make them come out” (“Olsen” N.p.). And when Olsen’s words *did* come out, he could not help but stutter, stammer, and repeat things. So although it appears Olsen did not experience a trauma that entailed world-loss,²⁸ his “word-loss” functioned as an image for one who had, that is, for one who, in attempting to “encircle” their trauma in writing, senses language’s inadequacy and feels rhetorically compelled to start again and again. But as Bernard-Donals notes, although “[a]ny

²⁷ “Ironic” because Olsen’s loss of speech performatively enacted the loss of his First Amendment right to freedom of speech.

²⁸ Olsen claims to remember the night of his incident quite well, which is surprising given the head trauma he received. For example, in a recent interview with Rachel Maddow, he said:

I remember the whole night. I remember getting to [the protest]. I remember standing with the other veteran, Josh, in navy blues. Even after I got hit, I remember people carrying me away and driving me to the hospital. I remember just about everything.
(N.p.)

testimony designed to reflect the [traumatic] event will inevitably fail, . . . testimony is ironically (and troublingly) the only vehicle in which that moment can be conveyed” (31). Thus, although the subject who narrativizes their trauma (or its “forgetting”) and thereby reproduces a sense of “self” in its wake may “stutter” (Deleuze), repeat, and so on, there is no other option. For as Rickert remarks, “as subjects, who we are is but the continual and anticipatory process of recalling and narrativizing the past” (24).

BIO-POLITICAL MEMORY: THE FORWARD-LOOKING GAZE

I will conclude this chapter by returning to the question of biopolitics, or the lived struggle to determine an alternative mode of existence in the face of strategies for domination and control. Throughout my analysis of memory’s rhetorical production by discourse, images, affects, and trauma, I employed examples from the Occupy Movement and other activist struggles that evince such an attempt to invent alternative forms of life and to reveal how the rhetorical production of memory can have “enabling” effects. For Hardt and Negri, as for Foucault, biopolitics “is best defined as an alternative production of subjectivity, which not only resists power but also seeks autonomy from it” (56). This entails that biopolitical subjectivity, and what I in turn like to describe as “biopolitical memory and forgetting,”²⁹ involve/s the making of someone new—someone who has come to perceive-recall life in an alternative way to those “frames” that facilitate obedience in the face of power. Or in Lynn Worsham’s words, they involve producing “a

²⁹ In order to provide another way of thinking the concepts of biopolitical memory and forgetting, it is tempting to claim that they are roughly equivalent to *counter-memory* and *affirmative forgetting*.

revolutionary subject capable of transforming the world” (217) through socio-political resistance or political exodus (flight).

Thus, in its resistance to (or flight from) power and its capacity to transform the world, the biopolitical subject reveals the “minor” power of subjectivity itself, and reveals that power can come from anywhere, resist from anywhere, and that it does not belong solely to the oppressor. As Hardt and Negri note as well, this “power” entailed in biopolitics is tantamount to “the power of life by which we defend and seek our freedom” (57). However, such a freedom is not equivalent to “emancipation”³⁰ because, for example, even “becoming-activist” entails the production of a subject. So although one might justifiably argue that the production of activist subjectivities (at least in certain specific cases) leads to a more affirmative, “liberatory” form of life, this mode of existence is still the result of subjection and is therefore not “emancipatory.” This is precisely why Judith Butler contends that “the subject emerges as the *effect* of a prior power and as the *condition of possibility* for a radically conditioned form of agency” (14-15). Indeed, subjects cannot actively transform themselves without the prior production of their subjectivities, but it is this subjectivating movement that sometimes produces a subject that resists. And this observation holds in the case of activist subjectivity, too, because the power that produces a subject might involve, for example, the rhetorics of

³⁰ In *Commonwealth*, Hardt and Negri designate between emancipation and liberation in the following way: “whereas emancipation strives for the freedom of identity, the freedom to be *who you really are*, liberation aims at the freedom of self-determination and self-transformation, the freedom to determine *what you can become*” (331).

Occupy, and yet the subject who assimilates them into memory may one day eventually resist Occupy as a politics or strategy.

Moreover, since the biopolitical production of subjectivity and/or biopolitical memory and forgetting involves a subject who resists domination and control, and often does so because they have simultaneously been “de-subjectified,” perhaps affirmatively shedding their callous, individualist lens on life in favor of a counter-memorial vision of interrelationality and shared responsibility, what it seems is at stake in biopolitical production is nothing less than the future. This is precisely why Hardt and Negri note that the biopolitical subject and event are “forward-looking” (60); they involve tomorrow as it is already contained in today, and involve the opportunity to make life anew such that “[biopolitical] [e]vents of resistance have the power not only to escape control but also to create a new world” (61).

This is worth repeating: the biopolitical production of memory/forgetting (and the resisting subjectivities that it contributes to effectuating) involves nothing less than the prospect of building a new world. What sort of world this might entail is certainly open to question, but perhaps some of the most appropriate questions to ask here are: what sort of world might come into being if language and affects are acknowledged as inescapably shared, that no one owns them, caught up as they are in an endless sequential transmission and archiving? Or: what sort of world might actualize if thought and movement are understood as inexorably bound to others, so that it is inexcusable that many should suffer so that so few become “immortal?” And finally: what sort of world becomes possible when subjects seize their power to employ images to imagine new

histories and new narratives, and where the traumatic devastation of bodies is not an excuse to cower and demure, but an impetus to fight back (with others) against betrayal and fear? Indeed, perhaps such is the only “other world” for which one can justifiably/affirmatively hope, and thus striving for its actualization is what it means to believe in the world.³¹

³¹ Regarding belief in the world, Deleuze poetically muses that:

What we most lack is a belief in the world, we’ve quite lost the world, it’s been taken from us. If you believe in the world you precipitate events, however inconspicuous, that elude control, you engender new space-times, however small their surface or volume. It’s what you call *pietas*. Our ability to resist control, or our submission to it, has to be assessed at the level of our every move. (*Negotiations* 176)

Chapter #2 -- Giving an Account of One's Wealth: Percentile Narratives and Memory Analysis in Contemporary Composition

We are getting kicked out of our homes. We are forced to choose between groceries and rent. We are denied quality medical care. We are suffering from environmental pollution. We are working long hours for little pay and no rights, if we're working at all. We are getting nothing while the other 1 percent is getting everything. We are the 99 percent.

-- *We are the 99 Percent* tumblr. Archive

Those of us who pay for those of you who whine about all of that . . . or that . . . or whatever.

-- *We are the 53 Percent* tumblr. Archive

When the 'I' [or 'We'] seeks to give an account of itself, an account that must include the conditions of its own emergence, it must, as a matter of necessity, become a social theorist.

-- Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*

Over the past couple decades the role of memory in composition studies has been subjected to great scrutiny. This may come as a surprising claim, however, since discussions surrounding memory in the field are rarely as explicit as when Victor

Villanueva exclaims that “*Memoria* calls and pushes us forward. *Memoria* is a friend of ours. We must invite her into our classrooms and into our scholarship” (“*Memoria*” 19). Rather, scholarly debate regarding memory in composition has focused more on so-called “personal writing,” specifically, on the ethical question of asking for disclosure of a student writer’s past and whether one can deem any such disclosure as “authentic.” In response to whether teachers can judge student memories as authentic expressions of their lives, the discipline’s answer has been a resounding “No.” Regarding the reasons for this response, Lester Faigley, for example, explains how “[t]o ask students to write authentically about the self assumes that a unified consciousness can be laid out on the page” (127), and that “teachers of writing who define good writing as truth-telling assume that truth comes from within and can be conveyed transparently through language” (131). But although *fewer* teachers today expect students to express their true selves or to find their true voices, the jury is out as to whether or not students should write about themselves in composition classrooms. Scholars such as Villanueva contend that having students write about their memories is an activity with great socio-political promise, one that leads to the development of critical consciousness as well as realizations regarding how “we are—all of us—subject to the systemic” (*Bootstraps* xviii). By contrast, scholars such as Michelle Ballif argue that personal writing demands the production of a meaningful, cohesive subject-narrative (that ignores what it cannot account for), and calls students into an exposed, confessional stance with regard to the instructor, thus rendering it an activity “complicit with systems of oppression” (“Seducing” 78).

In the wake of this impasse regarding the place of “personal writing” in college classrooms, I will formulate a resolution called *im-personal writing*. This strategy has students write about their memories, but it critically tempers the activity in multiple ways, most importantly, by shifting emphasis away from having students “express” themselves while conveying memories to having them investigate how their memories have been rhetorically produced. I therefore dub this pedagogical strategy “im-personal,” because as Butler notes, “to the extent that the ‘I’ agrees, from the start, to narrate itself . . . , it agrees to circuit its narration through an externality, and so to disorient itself in the telling through modes of speech that have an *impersonal* nature” (52 emphasis mine). In other words, to convey one’s memories is not merely to relate one’s singular story, but to implicitly reveal the series of impersonal forces through which one has been produced as a subject. As an example of this strategy, I discuss how an instructor might assign “Percentile Narratives,” accounts of one’s socio-economic status like those employed by the Occupy Movement and its detractors. Using these narratives as a point of departure, I introduce a series of critical frameworks through which instructors can teach students to analyze the im-personal, rhetorical production of their memories, for instance, in relation to Bergson’s method of intuition, Foucault’s theory of discourse, and Freud’s theory of affect. I employ these perspectives not only because they reveal the ways in which memory is a multifaceted assemblage comprised of sensory data, language, and emotions, but because they simultaneously show how memories are produced primarily by forces outside one’s control. Investigations into memory are not *emancipatory*, then, if this term indicates an escape from the processes of subjectivity-production or the discovery of an

essential identity. Rather, following a distinction made by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (*Commonwealth* 331),³² one can only say that such memory examination is *liberatory* in that it reveals the forces to which one is subject, and facilitates an experiment within those modes of subjectivation. For as Victor Vitanza explains, “to be a subject in our society is inevitably to be subjected, individually and collectively” (156).

Moreover, the im-personal approach to student writing accommodates worries regarding narrative cohesion and excess, as well as confession. For starters, rather than demand students provide accounts of themselves that are “authentic,” im-personal writing aims to demystify the ideal of authenticity, asking instead for a kind of critically aware “mythology.” For as Judith Butler explains, “the history of [one’s] body is not fully narratable. To be a body is, in some sense, to be deprived of having a full recollection of one’s life” (*Giving* 38). That is, any attempt to give an account of oneself is constrained by non-knowledge (“opacity”) regarding one’s formation, so providing a cohesive self-narrative is impossible, and adding “fictional” elements, inescapable (39). Im-personal writing recognizes that narrative always leaves over something “seductively” un-produced, and attempting to cover over such an excess leads to fabrication. In other words, im-personal writing views student narrative not as the forcible extraction or confession of putative inner truth, but instead as the inventive production (“publication”)

³² In *Commonwealth*, Hardt and Negri designate between emancipation and liberation in the following way: “whereas emancipation strives for the freedom of identity, the freedom to be *who you really are*, liberation aims at the freedom of self-determination and self-transformation, the freedom to determine *what you can become*” (331).

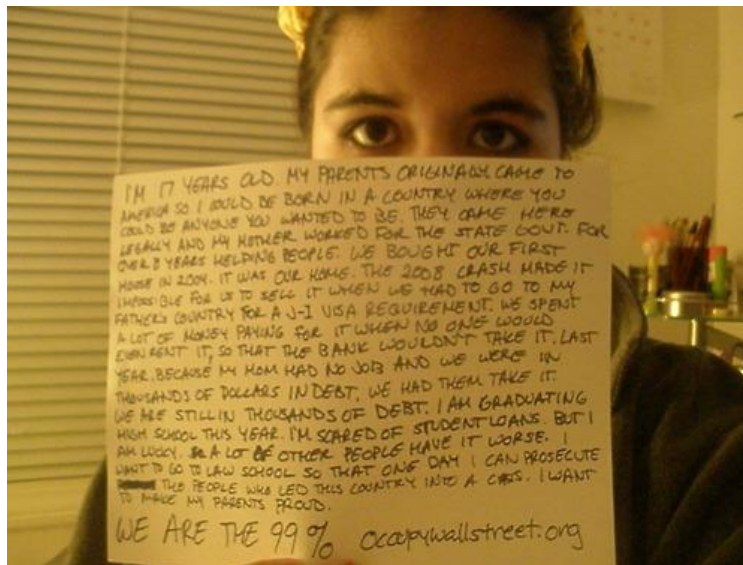
of subjectivity. The approach therefore marks a shift from the work of the early to the late Foucault, and emphasizes the “biopolitical” force that the publication of subjectivities resistant to power and control entails. And given that, as Sharon Crowley argues, “students’ subjectivities are the material of contemporary writing instruction” (*Composition* 221), this seems an appropriate plateau towards which to aim.

(A) IS FOR ARCHIVES (OF ECONOMIC STRUGGLE)

As best you can, give an account of your current economic situation as well as you and your family’s economic history—focusing on specific memories. Your account might include things like: “I am a student with \$40,000 in debt,” “I remember my parents choosing between groceries and rent,” or “I remember my grandma telling me about the value of college.” You can also add rhetorical flourishes like: “Occupy Wall Street!” or “I refuse to take a hand-out!” Finally, take a partial photo of yourself holding your account in hand, and post it to one of the following blog-sites: “We are the 99 Percent,” “We are the 53 Percent,” or “We are the 1 Percent.” You should visit these three sites for examples.

These instructions, which constitute a sample first prompt for im-personal writing, are inspired by the three tumblr. blog sites mentioned above, online spaces where one can give a narrative account of one’s wealth as well as critical commentary regarding it. Thus, Percentile Narratives, together with striking images, combine to produce archives

of economic struggle with the persuasive force to raise awareness regarding the inequalities/injustices of the global socio-economic system or to challenge the existence of such inequalities/injustices. Here, for example, is the narrative of a young immigrant woman frightened of taking out student loans and whose family has lost their home to foreclosure:



I'm 17 years old. My parents originally came to America so I could be born in a country where you could be anyone you wanted to be. They came here legally and my mother even worked for the state government for over 8 years helping other people. We bought our first house in 2004. It was our home. The 2008 crash made it impossible for us to sell it when we had to move to my dad's country for a J-1 visa requirement. We spent years paying for it (the mortgage) because no one would even rent it and

we didn't want the bank to take it. Last year, because my mom had no job and we were in thousands of dollars in debt, we had them take it. We are still in thousands of dollars in debt. I am graduating from high school this year. I am scared of student loans, but I am lucky. A lot of people have it worse. I want to go to law school so that one day I can prosecute the people who led this country into a crisis. I want to make my parents proud.

We are the 99%. (99 Percent N.p.)

As evidenced from the above example, Percentile Narratives are often full of memories, especially when coming from families with a history of marked poverty or wealth, which makes them an excellent candidate for the prompts of im-personal writing. Indeed, given that im-personal writing concerns itself with exposing the forces by which memory is produced, while taking into account Marx's and Engels' observation that "consciousness changes with every change in the conditions of . . . material existence" (52), it seems that recalling their socio-economic situations is an especially fruitful place for students to take up their investigations. Moreover, the "intrusion" or "disruption" involved in this prompt seems of the sort necessary for any instructor who hopes to challenge what bell hooks describes as the suffocating and "intense silence about the reality of class differences . . . in educational settings" (177). And challenging this silence provides students a rare opportunity to discuss the existence of socio-economic class in American life and educational dynamics, and to have a constructive space for doing so, whether one simply

has students share memories or delves into rigorous discussions of, for instance, alienation, neoliberal capitalism, or cultural hegemony.

Furthermore, writing Percentile Narratives encourages students to educate one another, as well as instructors, about the experiences and attitudes produced by various material (class) conditions, and shatters “the assumption that [students and instructors] share a common class background and perspective” (hooks 186). The activity therefore aides as well in resisting the problematic “banking model” of education so fiercely denounced by Paulo Freire (*Pedagogy* 71-86), shifting the classroom from being a space where “knowledge deposits” are unilaterally made only by the teacher into the intellectually “impoverished” and “sold out” students, to one of mutual respect and experiential exchange. In this type of environment, the student becomes a “student-teacher,” the teacher a “teacher-student” (72), and the writing classroom itself perhaps increasingly approaches a “horizontal” as well as democratic egalitarianism.³³

³³ No matter how egalitarian one wishes one’s classroom to become, it is problematic to pretend as though the university-level instructor does not maintain a position of power with relation to students. Indeed, as hooks forcefully explains, to pretend that no power difference exists between students and instructors is “a mistake” (187). This is not to say that pedagogical experiments in horizontalism are forlorn, only that one should be honest about existing power-relations between teachers and students.

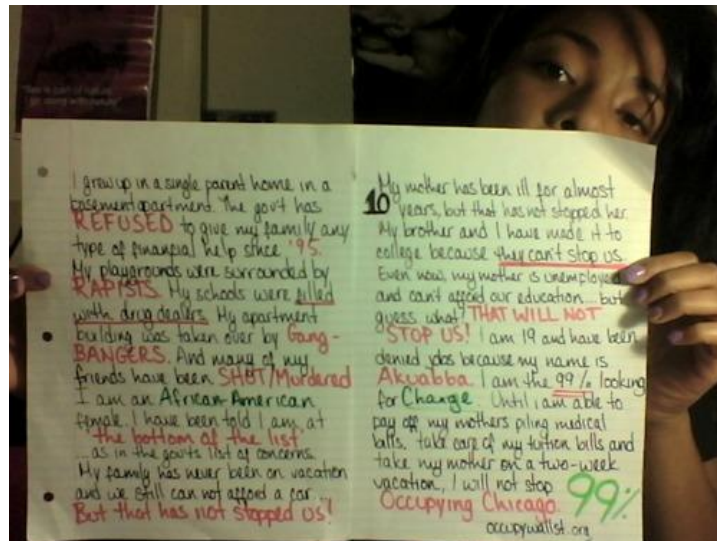
(L) IS FOR LIVED EXPERIENCE (AND ITS REAL CONDITIONS)

Refer to the event (or series of events) described in your Percentile Narrative. What stands out in this memory? Given the specifics of what you remember, what actions do you think it has led you to take? What features of the event(s) held your attention at the time so that you remembered them in this way? In contrast to the focus of your memory, what might you have forgotten about the event(s) in question? As you remember, how does your accumulated experience since the event change how you think about it? How might your memory be combined or blurred with other related memories? Lastly, what do you use to remember: writing, audio or video recording, rituals or practices, smells, photos, artifacts, or something else altogether?

Once a student has produced a series of memories via a Percentile (or other) Narrative to analyze, the next activity of im-personal writing involves responding to a series of questions regarding the “transcendental” formation of these memories derived from Henri Bergson’s method of intuition, a strategy regarding those preconscious factors that determine how recollections-perceptions are shaped “prior to” or at the advent of remembering and experiencing in order to “rhetorically” compel the behavior of subjects. In other words, these Bergsonian observations reveal the im-personal nature of memory because they show how memories are typically produced without the conscious guidance

of an intending subject. Moreover, these strategic questions help students to understand how their memories are produced so as to promote action, especially through their combination with other memories, and they involve an emphasis on the manifold of sensation (which in rhetorical studies is all-too-often relegated a role secondary to that of discourse). Indeed, in contrast to other approaches for rhetorical analysis, through focusing on sensation (and its conditions) students are prompted to consider how their memories are, in Bergson's words, "imagistic," and shaped with regard to their material interests and needs as well as their sensory recollection-perceptions of the world.

Provided his focus on sensation and movement in relation to memory, it is little surprise that Bergson states "we must never forget the utilitarian character of our mental functions, which are essentially turned towards action" (xvii). What he has in mind here is that the sensory assemblage of perception-recollection is pre-consciously produced with *attention to life*, such that it is always-already shaped with a view to responding to one's world. In fact, for Bergson, perception-recollections *are* latent actions, and thus have "rhetorical" power. To clarify these complex ideas, consider the Percentile Narrative of a young African-American woman who appears to have grown up on the streets of Chicago:



I grew up in a single parent home in a basement apartment. The government has refused to give my family any type of financial help since '95. My playgrounds were surrounded by rapists. My schools were filled with drug dealers. My apartment building was taken over by gang-bangers. And many of my friends have been shot/murdered. I am an African-American female. I have been told that I am at 'the bottom of the list' as in the government's list of concerns. My family has never been on vacation and we still can not afford a car. BUT THAT HAS NOT STOPPED US! My mother has been ill for almost 10 years, but that has not stopped her. My brother and I have made it to college because they can't stop us. Even now, my mother is unemployed and can't afford our education. . . . but guess what? THAT WILL NOT STOP US! I am 19 and have been denied jobs because my name is Akuabba. I am the 99% looking

*for change. Until I am able to pay off my mother's piling medical bills,
take care of my tuition bills and take my mother on a two week vacation, I
will not stop occupying Chicago. (99 Percent N.p.)*

In-line with the Bergsonian method, a teacher would likely have a student like Akuabba, who is recalling places such as playgrounds, apartment buildings, and other physical sites, consider these place-based memories with regard to action. For instance, what did she experience or hear about that led her to remember places “surrounded by rapists” and “filled with drug dealers?” What precautions did these perceptions lead Akuabba to take at the time? Do they continue to affect her choices and perceptions today (and perhaps later in life)? Thus, the Bergsonian approach to memory-analysis involves urging students to gauge the rhetorical force of their memories and their functional importance, investigating how those memories have compelled/compel action in one way or another.

Another way that a Bergsonian approach urges students to consider the rhetorical structuration of their memories pertains to how they were produced. According to Bergson, just as memories are “contracted” so as to promote action, they are also “rotated” in terms of how they interest and produce the subject who remembers. As he explains, “[t]he images [of perception-recollection] will appear to turn towards our body the side emphasized by the light upon it, which interests our body” (29). What this entails, then, is that whether one is recollecting or perceiving (a distinction that Bergson often problematizes), such experiences are pre-structured with regard to “interest.” For instance, a Bergsonian might encourage Akuabba to consider which interests led to her

recall that she has been “at the bottom of the list. . . . as in the government’s list of concerns.” Does she have an interest in being placed higher on this list? What about her family members? And conversely, an instructor might ask her to consider what she has “forgotten” about her past, that is, what she may have experienced but that remains on the margins of memory given that she had no interest in it or could not act upon it—which is a “speculative” consideration that may invite creative fabrication.³⁴ For as Bergson explains, “[o]ur representation of matter is the measure of our possible action upon bodies: it results from the *discarding* of what has no interest for our needs, or more generally for our functions” (30 emphasis mine). For example, Akuabba might consider certain details of her inner-city neighborhood and its inhabitants that she is capable of recalling dimly, but that she typically overlooks (and why). Students may need an instructor (or another student) to aid them in such considerations by refocusing their attention on something else, but such prompting will help them to better understand just how much memory has to hold away from immediate attention in order for a subject to function. So although it is tempting to gloss over what students may have “forgotten” because these details are “uninteresting,” or because trying to account for them may lead

³⁴ Concerning the prevalence of narrative fabrication, Butler explains how “I cannot explain exactly why I have emerged in this way, and [thus] my efforts at narrative reconstruction are always undergoing revision” (40). For Butler, giving an account of oneself is always an on-going process and inevitably involves myth-making, so truth-telling cannot be a viable criterion for student “personal writing.”

to mythologizing, it is worth attending to these processes of “forgetting” and myth-making in order to provide a more intricate picture of how memory functions.

Another way Bergson guides one through the analysis of memories is with regard to how they contaminate one another. He argues that every experience is already produced in conjunction with one’s past memories, and likewise, that any memory is contaminated by a host of previous experiences. As Bergson himself puts it, “[o]ur perceptions are undoubtedly interlaced with memories, and inversely, a memory . . . only becomes actual by borrowing the body of some perception into which it slips” (72).

Along these lines, students can employ Bergson’s insights to consider how the memories from their narratives, Percentile or otherwise, are potentially combined and/or confused with other memories. For example, Akuabba could start with her observation about being denied jobs, something that she implies has happened multiple times but that has been generalized in her narrative. She could then attempt to analyze specific instances of when this happened, considering how her memory might have blurred them together.

Finally, Bergson joins several other philosophers in arguing that memory is produced wholly “on the outside,” in other words, that it does not activate spontaneously from some interior “self” but must be stimulated environmentally. For him, memories come from the world, are “stored in” the world, and the world calls them forth (30). For the purposes of im-personal writing, what Bergson’s insight suggests is that one prompt students to focus what “artifacts” or environments they employ to remember what they remember. For instance, subjects often remember with the aid of photos, videos, audio, texts, rituals, places, smells, and more. Along these lines, one can urge students to

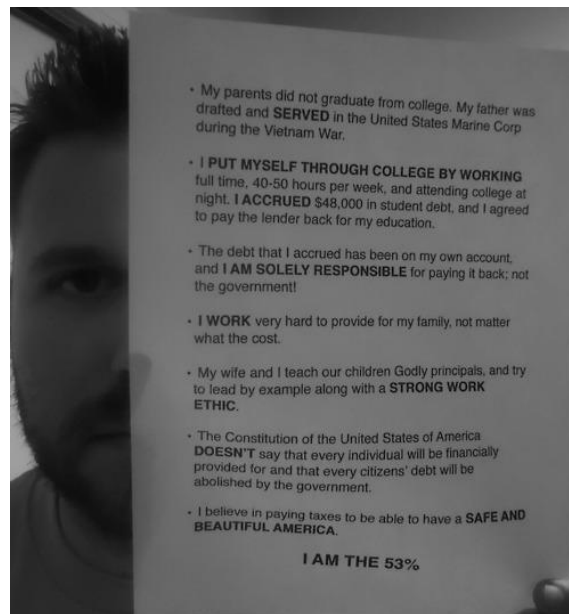
consider the forces that rhetorically compel the activation of their memories. Perhaps Akuabba remembers the basement apartment of her childhood whenever she smells the pungent odor of mold, or recalls a deceased friend whenever she hears the melody of a certain sad song. In each case, Bergson would argue, her memory derives “from the outside.”

(I) IS FOR INSTITUTIONS AND IDEAS (THAT PRODUCE MEMORY DISCURSIVELY)

Carefully analyze the way you described the memories in your Percentile Narrative. What institutions, rituals, or events have you described, for example, such as took place at your school or church? What concepts or ideas are most prevalent like economic justice or personal responsibility? Now choose one or two of these entities and research their history as thoroughly as you can. What, if anything, about this history is controversial or involves conflicting accounts? What about it runs contrary to what you previously thought? Lastly, revisit how you described the memories in your Percentile Narrative. What might you now describe differently? Who might potentially benefit or suffer depending upon which description you employ or convey to others? For example, who might gain or lose power, wealth, knowledge, and so on?

At this point, im-personal writing shifts emphasis from the transcendental conditions of memory-production outlined by Bergson to the discursive-historical ones

developed by Michel Foucault. And although many in the field of composition studies have turned to Foucault for inspiration, his “principle of externality” is especially relevant to the project of im-personal writing because, as Bruce Herzberg explains, it “opposes the interpretation of the text and looks instead for the external conditions of its existence” (73). This analysis of “external conditions” entails prompting students to genealogically trace out why their memories are conceptualized or framed in the way that they are rather than interpreting what they *mean*, linking these conceptions to discursive rhetorics with distinct histories. In order to outline what this discursive-historical analysis looks like in more detail, consider the following Percentile Narrative from a young man who emphasizes his work ethic and sizable college debt:



My parents did not graduate from college. My father was drafted and SERVED in the United States Marine Corp during the Vietnam War. I PUT MYSELF THROUGH COLLEGE BY WORKING full time, 40-50 hours per week, and attending college at night. I ACCRUED \$48,000 in student debt, and I agreed to pay the lender back for my education. The debt that I accrued has been on my own account, and I AM SOLELY RESPONSIBLE for paying it back; not the government! I WORK very hard to provide for my family, no matter what the cost. My wife and I teach our children Godly principles, and try to lead by example along with a STRONG WORK ETHIC. The Constitution of the United States of America DOESN'T say that every individual will be financially provided for and that every citizens' debt will be abolished by the government. I believe in paying taxes to be able to have a SAFE AND BEAUTIFUL AMERICA. I AM THE 53%. (53 Percent N.p.)

Responding to this or a similar narrative, an instructor employing the Foucauldian “mode” of im-personal writing might encourage the student to research the history and controversies surrounding the Vietnam War, the history of public funding and student debt in post-secondary education, or the conceptual development of the Protestant-Capitalist work ethic. While conducting this type of historical research, the Foucauldian approach also invites students to consider what practices, relations of power, or types of production they promote and sustain by remembering in a certain way. For instance, how

do US military branches, major banking institutions, or multinational corporations benefit when one holds certain attitudes towards war, student loans, or the amount of labor it is acceptable for someone to do throughout their lifetime? Conversely, who suffers? Through questions such as these, students can begin to undergo a rhetorical shift, slowly coming to recognize that the way their memories are framed is not simply *the way things are*, but is the result of historically-determined concepts or discourses inextricably entangled in relations of power.

Unsurprisingly, then, the Foucauldian strategies of im-personal writing involve an attunement to the production of remembering subjects by discourses implicated in a number of power-relations. For as Foucault infamously argues, “the subject (and its substitutes) must be . . . analyzed as a complex and variable function of discourse” (*Language* 138). This attunement to the discursive production of subjectivities does not carry one away from the question of memory, however, but draws one deeper into it. For Foucault, every experience is produced and articulated by a discursive “memory” that makes it possible. Or as Gilles Deleuze puts it, “[for Foucault], time as subject, or rather subjectivation, is called memory” (*Foucault* 107). What this means is that, rather than perceive-recall the world in some pure/unmediated fashion, the truths of one’s world are “framed” by the archive of language that one has been subjected to throughout one’s lifetime. This characterization of “subjectivation” (the discursive processes of subjectivity-production) *as memory* thus goes hand in hand with Foucault’s concept of “counter-memory,” because in order for someone to remember in a way that is “counter” to their previous modes of remembering, they must have already been subjectivated to

remember a particular way. In other words, in order to “disrupt” the archive of discourse framing one’s world and thought, one must have already been subject to (“be”) that archive.

The Foucauldian mode of im-personal writing thus compels students to consider the archives of discourse that frame their “own” memories, and to examine the effects of these frames. For example, consider the difference between perceiving pro-Occupy narratives as “whining for a government handout” and perceiving them as “crying out for economic justice.” Different archives of discourse produce not only different perceptions but different *perceivers*, different subjects of perception-recollection. But this does not mean, as Foucault puts it, “that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, [or] altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies” (*Discipline* 217). For a subject to remember at all, to have the discursive “frame” necessary for remembering, it must have been produced by specific rhetorics and practices.

However, as Foucault makes clear, subjects have the capacity to resist one mode of subjectivation (or to “counter-remember”) when they are exposed to competing modes, and that is one motivation for assigning im-personal writing. Indeed, liberation might be considered the recognition of one’s modes of subjectivation via exposure to other modes, and freedom, the capacity to experiment within those different modes. The aim of im-personal writing assignments is thus to provide students the opportunity to consider how the articulations of their memories compare to how others describe the same events, and to conceptually experiment with what is at stake in articulating memories in one way or

another; in Herzberg's terms, it invites students to "combin[e] critical reflection with writing practice" (81).

(F) IS FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS (AND THEIR UNCONSCIOUS AFFECTIONS)

Return to the event(s) of your Percentile Narrative. This time, consider your memories with special attention on how you were affected by others. How did your family, friends, or social groups influence you to behave the way you did, or to remember the way you remembered? Were there social expectations or consequences for doing or not doing what you did? What emotions were you experiencing at the time, and how did others perhaps influence you to feel this way? Is it possible that what you remember regarding an event did not actually happen, but was suggested to you by someone? How might you have been affected by others in ways you cannot remember, either in terms of your behavior during the event or regarding how you remembered it? Finally, how much do you trust your memory of the event(s) in question and why? (Consider interviewing someone who might have affected you to get their side of the story).

Having outlined the Bergsonian and Foucauldian modes of im-personal writing, I want now to offer up a distinctly Freudian way to approach having students analyze their memories. However, the Freudian prompts of im-personal writing are not designed to have students analyze their memories in *classic* psychoanalytic terms, that is, regarding

defense mechanisms and productive of “Daddy-Mommy-Me” narratives. Rather, they are designed to get students to reflect on the ways in which they have been unconsciously persuaded and affected by others, and on the inevitable myth-making that giving an account of these encounters entails.

Freud’s connection to memory is a complex one, and recalls the familiar psychoanalytic topology regarding the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious composition of the subject. And as Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen notes, “[t]he unconscious, for Freud, *is* memory, a storehouse of traces, inscriptions, remembrances, [and] fantasies” (20), which implies that memory is primarily unavailable for conscious presentation. Moreover, the unconscious is an entirely im-personal form of memory, because it “belongs” not to the subject, but to others; that is, to the ways that others have affected/produced the subject in question. According to Freud, unconscious “memory,” those deep psychical inscriptions that guide one’s behavior and emotional responses, is produced through “forgotten” social relations to others.

For Freud, then, the production of memory is a social event. As he explains, “[i]n the individual’s mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first[,] psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well” (*Group 3*). Freud’s observation suggests that whenever one remembers or behaves in any way, others such as one’s parents, siblings, lovers, friends, teachers, or leaders are “already there,” so to speak, affecting one in ways that are irretrievable to recollection. Or as Borch-Jacobsen puts it, “the Freudian subject *is* the other, is *the same as* the other”

(16). That is, who one is involves a non-declinable relation to others that is, primarily, irretrievable and non-narratable. So when students recall and write about events in terms of how they were affected and persuaded by others, they are encouraged to grapple with an excess that narrative cannot capture.

In order to clarify im-personal writing's deployment of the Freudian model, consider the following Percentile Narrative composed by a young woman who grew up in a wealthy family, but now lives a very different life from her parents:



I was born into a wealthy family. I am 27 and I have never had to be financially independent. I have more money and assets than I will ever know what to do with. I love my family and am grateful for the life their wealth has afforded me, but I hate how they have so much money they have to hire people to figure out what to do with it. They hire people to create tax shelters, get around estate laws, and turn money into more

money. It is so complicated that I have stopped trying to understand it all. I quit a coveted corporate job 2 ½ years ago. Since then I have been a full time volunteer at a homeless shelter, advocated for victims of domestic violence who were stuck with their abusers for financial reasons, and spent my time traveling internationally and ‘following my dreams.’ Meanwhile, my friends and all the amazing people I have met on my journey struggle with student loan debt, not having a place to live, food to eat, access to health care, or a way out. TAX ME MORE. I can afford it. I am the 1% and I stand with the 99%. (1 Percent N.p.)

Provided this particular narrative or one akin to it, several opportunities arise for taking up the question of memory and affective social relations. For example, the young woman above could consider the ways in which her family’s wealth has affected her emotionally as well as her attitude towards wealth in general. An instructor might also invite her to consider her decision to quit her corporate job and become a volunteer, focusing on how her relationship to her family might have persuaded her to do so. Thus, by writing about memories with an attunement to affectability, students not only see how their behavior is overtly influenced by others, but begin to sense the unconscious, irretrievable, ways in which others affect and persuade them.

To further relate the notion of affect to rhetoric, consider Borch-Jacobsen’s remark that it is characterized by “persuasion without a rhetorician” (71), or persuasion without the acknowledgement of subjects. This type of influence is especially prevalent

in large groups, and “Freud recognized the fundamental fact that all subjectivity and all individual desire vanish in crowds” (25). So as students analyze their memories, they can consider not only how, as in the example above, a group of family members or the homeless might have affected them, but they can consider what social consequences might have ensued had they not behaved or remembered in accordance with group norms.

Moreover, because affection is unconscious, or as Diane Davis puts it, “‘persuasion’ frequently succeeds without presenting itself to cognitive scrutiny” (*Inessential* 2), this entails an obstacle for “truthful” narrative. But this is no obstacle for im-personal writing, because as Borch-Jacobsen explains, “self”-narration implicitly relies upon the poetic capacity of myth-making, and the explicitly forlorn attempt to “represent the unrepresentable” (35). Indeed, as students consider their memories, analyzing why they behaved as they did or remembered as they remembered, when they are asked to consider the affections of others, this is an un(re)presentable event. In order to give an account of oneself, though, one has no choice but to mythologize (or simply to *remain silent*). Yet myths/silences are no less powerful for being myths/silences, even as they reveal the subject’s incapacity to master her or his own story. In fact, this incapacity is precisely why Butler argues that “any effort ‘to give an account of oneself’ will have to fail in order to approach being true” (42). Thus, if “authenticity” is to retain any meaning in regard to student writing, perhaps it is found in the struggle to affirm one’s “self”-blindness, and the inevitable myths and silences born of this struggle.

Before closing out this section, I should also note another type of persuasion closely linked to affect, namely, *suggestion*. Suggestion involves memories that, rather

than actually having been experienced by a subject, are “suggested” to the subject by another, and they have distinct rhetorical force because, as Freud notes:

[w]hat distinguishes a suggestion from other kinds of psychical influence, . . . is that in the case of a suggestion an idea is aroused in another person’s brain which is not examined in regard to its origin but is accepted just as though it had arisen spontaneously in that brain. (*Affective* 67)

Freud argues that suggestion has such significant persuasive power because, when it takes place, the influence of others is “forgotten,” and so one takes their ideas as one’s own. Thus, when students are analyzing and writing about their memories, they can consider which of them are actually “theirs,” or whether something may have been suggested to them. For example, the woman above might speculate on who gave her the idea to leave her corporate job, or on who might have suggested that she become a volunteer, all while acknowledging the potentially “mythic” quality of this account. Furthermore, students can consider not only the suggestions of other subjects, but purveyors of cultural and economic suggestion such as television and Internet feeds. Considerations such as these are important because they call the veracity of memory into question, encouraging students to view their recollections as something besides pristine, reliable, and self-generated (as in Current-Traditional Rhetoric) (*Methodical* 12), and help students to recognize the power of media on memory.³⁵

³⁵ In *The Methodical Memory*, Sharon Crowley explains how the dominant form of teaching writing in the US, Current-Traditional Rhetoric, operates according to three faulty assumptions about memory: “first, that [memory] could reliably investigate its own workings; second . . . [memory] work[s] in

(E) IS FOR ETHICAL STRATEGIES (FOR PUTTING MEMORY INTO THE SERVICE OF LIFE)

Now that you have thoroughly analyzed the memories in your Percentile Narrative, it is time to put them to work. Considering everything that you have written and learned thus far, what is the most important thing that you've realized about (your) life? More importantly, what does your analysis inspire you to do, or to convince others to do? What will you argue (or do) in order to convince them? In other words, how will the analysis of your memories change your life and lead you to change the lives of others? Finally, is there some memory from your Percentile Narrative that you would like to "forget?" That is, something that you can recognize has happened but that you no longer want to be influenced by? What will you do to ensure that this "forgetting" is successful?

Thus far, the im-personal approach to writing has encouraged students to investigate how their memories are produced by socio-economic and transcendental conditions, discourses with specific histories and relations to power, and by unconscious affects. That memory is approached in this manner derives from the notion that, as

an organized linear sequence . . . and third, that the mind's sequential workings [are] accurately inscribed in memory and could be accurately reproduced upon demand" (12). Im-personal writing therefore attempts to dynamite such suppositions about memory in writing by attuning to the unconscious, affect, and suggestion.

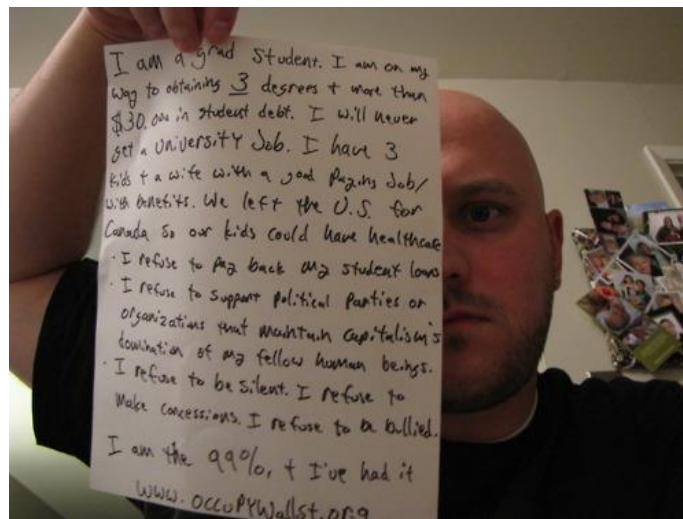
Deleuze puts it, “[t]here’s no subject, but a production of subjectivity: subjectivity has to be produced, when its time arrives, precisely because there is no subject” (*Negotiations* 114). Following Deleuze, the argument that subjectivities are produced entails that memories (and the truths that articulate them) do not originate from the depths of an interior “self” and are thus waiting for expression in writing, but rather, that memories are produced “on the outside” by a multiplicity of forces. One must therefore have students follow memory outside to its sites of production in order for them to effectively analyze it.

However, it will not suffice to have students merely investigate the rhetorical production of their memories without these investigations leading anywhere, and so the prompts of im-personal writing conclude with a shift to activity, resistance, and invention. For after students give an account of themselves, it is time to experiment with *what their memories can do*. Or, provided a little Nietzschean flair, one might exclaim: “Let us at least learn better how to employ [memory] for the purpose of *life*” (66)! Responding to this Nietzschean call, however, is not as simple as asking students to advocate for something in writing. The traditional “mode” of argumentation surely has a place here, but it does not fully encompass the Nietzschean vision. For if someone advocates something in the name of invigorating life, it is the invigoration itself that most concerns im-personal writing—for it is attuned to the project of living differently (“counter-living”), and thus relates not only to remembering in particular ways, but to the potential need for affirmative forgetting(s).

Having recalled and thoroughly analyzed a particular event (or events), students are now prepared to ask a series of questions about living on and letting go. For as Nietzsche explains:

[c]heerfulness, the good conscience, the joyful deed, confidence in the future – all of them depend . . . on one's being just as able to forget at the right time as to remember at the right time . . . (63)

According to Nietzsche, living joyfully and confidently entails knowing when to remember and when to forget, knowing when to draw from (one's) history and when to leave the past behind. In order to link up these insights to im-personal writing, take for example the narrative of an angry young man that has emigrated to Canada and refuses to repay his student loans:



I am a grad student. I am on my way to obtaining 3 degrees and more than \$30,000 in student debt. I will never get a university job. I have 3 kids and a wife with a good paying job, with benefits. We left the U.S. for Canada so our kids could have health care. I refuse to pay back my student loans. I refuse to support political parties or organizations that maintain capitalism's domination of my fellow human beings. I refuse to be silent. I refuse to make concessions. I refuse to be bullied. I am the 99%, and I've had it. (99 Percent N.p.)

For Nietzsche, memory has value only insofar as it is put into the service of (one's) life, or insofar as it invigorates action. In the example at hand, one can see the young man hinting at memories regarding his education, his family and their emigration, and so on. But the crucial aspect of his Percentile Narrative is that after alluding to these memories, he explains how he is invigorated to take action: "I refuse to support," "I refuse to be silent," "I refuse to make concessions," "I refuse to be bullied." Nietzsche would likely say that these refusals (or "No's!") are simultaneously a critical affirmation (a "Yes!") regarding the young man's future courses of action. And critical affirmations and calls to action such as these are what the final prompt of im-personal writing aims for, whether articulated in ferocious bursts or intricate arguments. The key is transmuting memory into activity, for as Bergson points out, all memories are latent actions.

Furthermore, the Nietzschean deployment of memory for life involves an attunement to forgetting. As John Poulakos explains, "if we are to place [memory] in the

service of our life, we must *rid ourselves of the burdens of the past* and strive to create from them materials that are useful, that augment our capacity to live joyfully” (90 emphasis mine). What Poulakos is alluding to here is Nietzsche’s concept of “affirmative forgetting,” a notion that has nothing to do with being unable to remember something or obliviousness. Rather, affirmative forgetting concerns the desire to accept that an event has happened, but to no longer draw from it as one charts the course of one’s life. As Bradford Vivian explains,

[affirmative] forgetting is an exercise of self-discipline rather than delusion, a form of judgment in which we overcome our own invented or received perceptions of former times, people, and events as a mechanism for overcoming whatever self-defining flaws we have inherited from them.

(54)

Following Vivian’s outline, an instructor might encourage the young man above to elaborate on his life as a student, focusing specifically on the observations that he has multiple degrees and significant debt but “will never get a university job.” Then one might ask the young man if he intends to “forget” his life as a student after he graduates, that is, whether he will acknowledge his past as a student, but “refuse” to allow that past to haunt his future.

However, it is important to remain honest about the possibility of affirmative forgetting in relation to “self”-mastery. For although “forgetting” can certainly enhance the beauty and dynamism of one’s life, it is not as simple as flipping a light-switch. Subjectivities can become incredibly calcified, especially regarding

affections/subjectivations that took place early in life. This is no small point, for as the late James Berlin related to me through Lester Faigley, it is this difficulty inherent in the project of student forgetting that lies at the heart of all collegiate education, and is what I think Hardt and Negri imply when in *Declaration* they contend that “[t]he greatest gift a teacher can give is the recognition that each student has the power to think” (27). But although the critical thought entailed by “forgetting” is often difficult and painfully slow, as Davis explains, “[t]here is something about the dis/covering and radical shedding (affirmative forgetting) of past/present foundations that leaves one wide open to previously unthought potentialities” (*Breaking* 166). Of course, it is up to students to decide what part of their pasts they deem worth shedding or striving to overcome, but as Poulakos deftly summarizes, “because no choice is in and of itself necessary, what is chosen and what is not depends on the [rhetorician’s] purpose. But if this is so, every rhetorical purpose can be viewed as an amalgam of remembrance and forgetfulness” (96).

CONFESSION OF SINS, PUBLICATION OF SUBJECTS

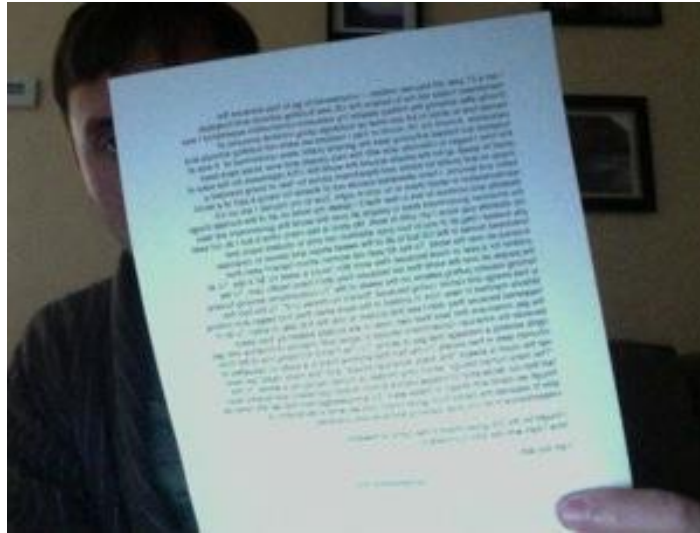
Although it is tempting to wrap up and get out after outlining the prompts and theoretical rationales behind im-personal writing, in closing, a critical concern still requires attention, namely, the relationship between student narrative and *confession*. As mentioned at the outset of the chapter, although many in composition studies view “personal writing” as valuable and transformative, others (justifiably) view this activity with suspicion. More specifically, some see having students write about their memories as exposing them to teacher surveillance, and thus becoming more susceptible to

pedagogical abuses of power. In this light, student narrative is viewed as akin to a religious confession that does not liberate subjects, but leaves them open to greater monitoring and control. Faigely, for example, explicitly takes this position when he says that “[t]he practice of writing about the self in college composition might be viewed as part of a much larger technology of confession for the production of truth in Western societies” (23).

The worry that writing about the “self” is a confessional practice derives from the work of Foucault, specifically his *History of Sexuality Vol. 1*. Therein, he explains how, although it may seem liberatory to talk or write about one’s sexuality *ad nauseum*, the proliferation of discourses on sexuality actually opens one to increased monitoring and norming by power. Michelle Ballif presciently summarizes this view when she states:

Thus, as Foucault argues, we must not think that by saying ‘yes’ to the liberation of discourses, the disclosure of silences and secrets, that we are saying ‘no’ to power. In fact, Foucault contends, we are already in a constant state of disclosure, that the imperative to confess meets us at every corner. (80)

Provided this observation, it would seem that writing about one’s memories is a confessional practice that leaves one naked before the leering eyes of the teacher, increasingly subjectivated rather than liberated. In order to evaluate this claim, though, a look at one last Percentile Narrative is instructive, this time, one coming from a young veteran of the Iraq War:



I am a 27 year old Iraq war veteran. I volunteered to go to Iraq because the mainstream media led me to believe the US was building schools and hospitals. Shortly after entering the military despite my extensive construction experience I was trained how to shoot[,] to kill[,] and blow up buildings using minimal amounts of explosives. Around my 7th month in Iraq I realized we were not building schools and hospitals but instead enforcing laws the general public were uninformed of. It was at this time I began to internally side with the [I]raqi people and ever since have been afraid to speak up for the people around the world the USA oppresses for the sake of cheap oil and profits for banks and department stores[,] for fear of being branded a traitor and terrorist. I have attempted suicide out of shame for being a part of a world war/domination in which there is no end in sight. (99 Percent N.p.)

If one understands memory-conveyance as a form of confession, this example is certainly edifying. Looking through this lens, here one finds a subject “confessing” to being misled, engaging in violent activity, exhibiting complicity with problematic institutions, siding with “the enemy,” and so on. Moreover, one finds an admission of shame and a palpable sense of guilt, feelings often associated with confession, not to mention an explicit recognition that the narrative will open the subject in question to greater surveillance and control. Moreover, one can imagine (unsympathetic) military personnel viewing this narrative as a confession of weakness, traitorousness, and cowardice. When the narrative is read in this way, it is thus hard not to agree with Ballif when she argues that writing about oneself “in no way *liberates* the subject from the process of subjectification, the process of becoming subject[,]” produced before the watchful eyes of power (83). For as I have argued throughout, not only is there no subject without a production of subjectivity, in the example above, the subject seems to have been coerced into confession for the purposes of control—a far cry from liberation. However, is there another way of viewing the narrative that might lead one to reframe its functioning and effects?

In order to produce a counter-reading (or a “parallel” reading) of the Iraq Vet narrative, one can turn, appropriately enough, to Foucault. For although Foucault is highly critical of confession in the *History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, he later re-thinks this critique and transforms it. As Butler explains:

In the last years of his life, Foucault returned to the question of confession, reversing his earlier critique in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, where he indicts confession as a forcible extraction of sexual truth, a practice in the service of a regulatory power that produces the subject as one who is obligated to tell the truth about his or her desire. (112)

Following Butler's introduction, what Foucault eventually decides (following a crisis in his thought) is that confession is a productive rhetorical event whereby the subject affirmatively "publishes" her- or himself, rather than *merely* an extraction of truth before power.³⁶ This publication of oneself, Butler explains, does not "correspond to some putative inner truth, and [its] constitutive appearance is *not* to be construed as mere illusion" (112). In other words, when someone "publishes" their memories, they do not express a self from the depths of their innermost being, but rather, they *produce* a "self" contingently. This production is not an illusion, Butler explains, because the subject "speaks itself, but in the speaking it becomes what it is" (113). So in relation to the Iraq Vet narrative above, one can alternatively read it as the publication of a subject in resistance to power (via a "minor" form of power), that is, as exemplifying what Hardt and Negri call *biopolitics*—"the power of life by which we defend and seek our freedom" (*Commonwealth* 57). So even if "publication" exposes one to a controlling power, the act can simultaneously designate resistance to power ("counter-power") as well.

³⁶ For more on Foucault and confession, see "About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self."

What the above observations on subjectivity imply, however, is that “publication” requires a *sacrifice*, and not just in relation to exposure. For there is a mechanism in operation whereby the instant one “speaks oneself” through the available modes of persuasion, that is, the rhetorics of one’s surrounding truth-regimes, one forsakes articulating whatever is in-appropriable by those regimes. Or as Butler explains, the published “manifestation” of one’s subjectivity becomes who one is, and this production leaves over an excess that discourse cannot account for (114). For instance, as the Iraq Vet above gives an account of himself, he is bound within specific rhetorical parameters, and so does not employ terms such as “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder victim.” Yet even if terms such as these were employed, they too would leave over an excess. So as Butler summarizes, “any discourse, any regime of intelligibility, constitutes us *at a cost*. Our capacity to reflect upon ourselves, to tell the truth about ourselves, is correspondingly limited by what the discourse, the regime, cannot allow into speakability” (121). Thus, as teachers of writing, it is crucial to attend to this observation regarding what is “speakable” in relation to rhetorical truth-regimes, and to talk to students about the limitations and dangers of publicizing their memories. In doing so, perhaps one also attends to the call for “seduction” of which Ballif speaks, by recognizing that the “refusal to be produced by meaning, interpretation, and understanding” (88) is a form of resistance in which one (as a singular body) is always-already engaged, but that one must jettison one’s totalizing narrative impulses to realize.

As this investigation draws to a close, then, one is left with the sense that any conclusions regarding the question of “personal writing” will have to remain provisional,

as is any attempt to “give an account of one’s self.” For now, I have offered up a strategy in the form of im-personal writing, whereby one guides students through the process of exploring how their memories, their subjectivities, have been produced by material, transcendental, discursive, and affective forces.³⁷ It is a strategy that attunes itself to the “seductive” opacity of subjectivities as well as the limitations of narrative, and recognizes that any attempt to “publish oneself” will come at a cost. However, such a cost is often worth it, as it provides students the opportunity to put their memories to work in an affirmative, biopolitical act of “resistance, innovation, and freedom” (*Commonwealth* 61). And although the freedom traversed through the activity of im-personal writing is not that of emancipation, for one cannot evade the production of one’s subjectivity to establish an essential identity, it is born of liberation, in that it exposes one to the modes by which one has been produced, and in so doing, opens not only the *kairotic* aperture of resistance, but the doorway to inventing an alternative and affirmative form of life.

³⁷ Readers may notice that the prompts of im-personal writing spell A LIFE. For Deleuze, A LIFE is the name for Being itself (as in Nietzsche and Spinoza). What I am contending, therefore, is that lived experience, discourse, affect, and so on, partly comprise this im-personal (immanent) LIFE that produces one as a lived subject.

Chapter #3 – The Infinite Archive: Social Media and the Revolutionary

Extension of Memory

But what are the *premises* of electronic memory? What will motivate a passage through an infinite archive?

-- Gregory Ulmer, *Heuretics: The Logic of Invention*

[R]ecent changes in the externalization of memory . . . find their most intense forms in contemporary social media.

-- Jeff Pruchnic and Kim Lacey, “The Future of Forgetting”

Could it be that memory has always been prosthetic, so that its extension into the networked cybernetics of mediatic communication was actually invented during the genesis of culture?

-- Steve Goodman and Luciana Parisi, “Machines of Memory”

[N]o fundamental distance establishes itself between the technical, natural, human, or existential worlds, no purity or absolute exteriority of one of these to the other.

-- Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book*

Looking back to the beginnings of rhetoric as a discipline, one finds a tension between this burgeoning field and that of philosophy, centered in particular on the question of memory and what happens when it is “technologically” assisted/articulated. This question regards whether memory is ever “pure” or “immediate,” that is, whether or not memory can articulate an event without the assistance of discursive rhetorics or other broadly “technological” marks. Yet both historically, as well as today, when someone posits that a “pure” and “immediate,” or “organic” and “live” memory exists (that non-rhetorical memory exists), they typically also contend that when memory is assisted technologically or rhetorically, problematic results inevitably follow.³⁸ For example, today some writers claim that the subject who employs technological writing or digital media to assist his or her memory becomes more “forgetful,” such as when Nicholas Carr avers that “[t]he Web is a technology of forgetfulness” (193), one that supposedly involves swapping “live” or “organic” memory for seemingly “dead” or “machinic” marks. Moreover, even when scholars today claim that technologically-aided memory is not inherently pernicious, they often still describe the technological inscription of memory as an “externalization” (maintaining a binary opposition between inside/outside the psyche), and so in turn they are compelled to describe this “externalization” as a forgetting. For instance, consider Jeff Pruchnic and Kim Lacey’s remark that “the future of rhetorical memory will be inextricably bound to our ability to ‘forget’ the content of

³⁸ The paradigmatic instance of this position, historically, is usually attributed to Plato’s *Phaedrus*, wherein Socrates avers that the one who employs writing will introduce forgetfulness into his or her soul.

experiential memory as it becomes stored in information networks” (475). What such descriptions regarding “externalization” suggest as well, is that the digital archivization of memory is not productive of memory’s structure, that is, the memory of the subject primarily remains self-same as it is “externalized.”

By contrast, in the following chapter I argue that memory is always-already technological such that oppositions between memory’s internalization/externalization deconstruct, that memory’s structure is radically reproduced through its digitization, and subjectivity is thereby an effect of digital archivization (and *an*-archivization). Thus, it is more appropriate to describe the subject’s recourse to digital memory as an archival “hyper-extension” rather than merely “externalization.” Moreover, because I agree whole-heartedly with Michelle Ballif when she claims that contemporary subjects are “constituted by and through . . . social and information networks” (63), I turn to social media applications such as Twitter, Facebook, live streaming video, and remixed memes in order to make my central contentions. Hence, this chapter reveals how subjectivities are produced through their archival relation to social media applications, the structure of memory is significantly reproduced through social mediation, and that archivization on social media entails the “hyper-extension” of an always-already technologized (or rhetorical) memory rather than its mere “externalization.”³⁹

³⁹ Although it is not something I take up in this chapter, the question of whether digital memory involves “forgetting” or “hyper-extension” appears to depend upon recourse to a specific binary—presence/absence. If one thinks of digital memory as human “forgetting,” this is likely because one conceives of memory that was once “present in the head” as now “absent” from it and instead present

ARCHIVE AND OUTSIDE

I want to begin by arguing that memory is always-already “technological,” which is to say, rhetorical, or that the binary between “living” and “technological” memory deconstructs (which is not to say it collapses). Thus, I argue social media involves instances of subjects being produced through “hyper-extending” memory and not merely “externalizing” it. Jacques Derrida supports this contention in his essay “Plato’s Pharmacy,” wherein he offers up an elegant and iconoclastic reading of Plato’s *Phaedrus*, challenging the ancient contention that writing leads one to become more forgetful by substituting “dead” marks for “live” memory. Derrida’s argument opens by highlighting an intellectual trepidation concerning “the substitution of the mnemonic device [such as written reminders] for live memory, of the prosthesis for the organ; the perversion that consists of replacing a limb by a thing” (108). That is, the “perversion” entailed in relying upon and thereby strengthening not the supposedly spontaneous powers of the human

online (See *Lingua* 147-149). By contrast, when one understands digital memory as “hyper-extension,” this suggests that the presence/absence binary is blurred because memory is neither neatly “here in the head” or “there on the network,” but exists somewhere in their relation to one another. This idea is closely connected to Ulmer’s observation that:

Opposed to the classical concept of memory as storing information in some specific locale from which it may be retrieved, connectionist designs of computer memory are based on a different characterization: ‘Information is not stored anywhere in particular. Rather it is stored everywhere. Information is better thought of as ‘evoked’ than ‘found’.

(*Heuretics* 36)

intellect, but the mechanical force of writing (or “rhetorics” broadly construed).

Significantly, Nicholas Carr provides a contemporary version of this worry when he writes that “[o]f all the sacrifices we make when we devote ourselves to the Internet as our universal medium, the greatest is likely to be the wealth of connections within our minds” (195), that is, the wealth of so-called “organic” memory (190).

It is easy to sympathize with Carr regarding certain adverse effects of employing digitized memory, in particular, productions of subjectivity that lead to a sped-up, absent-minded, or “buzzing” experience of the world (123). However, his suggestion that digitized forms of memory are somehow unnatural (or “artificial”), and that by contrast, “the mind of the experienced book reader” employs a non-artificial form of memory (123, 181), is problematic from a Derridian point of view. Derrida contends that memory is inescapably related to “artificiality”/rhetoricity, and he argues that attempts to sharply dichotomize “natural” and “artificial” memory ultimately deconstruct. This is because “writing,” or inscriptions of language/rhetorics broadly understood, are necessary for memory’s very production. Derrida avers that “[t]he outside is already *within* the work of memory,” that is, the so-called “artificial” inscriptions of the rhetorical mark are necessary for the constitution of memory as such. This is the case because “[m]emory always therefore already needs signs in order to recall the non-present, with which it is necessarily in relation . . . [so m]emory is contaminated by its first substitute” (109). In other words, for memory to operate at all, regardless of whether it is what Carr calls “biological memory,” memory requires an “artificial,” broadly-rhetorical mark/record in order to recall anything; so even the most seemingly “natural” memory is contaminated

by so-called “artificial” or archival inscriptions. Memory as such is a technological recording apparatus (machine).

Thus, Derrida maintains, problematizing the distinction between “inside” and “outside” the psyche, that:

[t]he ‘outside’ does not begin at the point where what we now call the psychic and the physical meet, but at the point where the *mneme*, instead of being present to itself in its life as movement of truth, is supplanted by the archive, evicted by a sign of re-memoration or of com-memoration.

(109)

In other words, the “outside” of written/machinic traces always-already breach the psyche’s seemingly pure “inside.” So-called “live” memory is never unmediated by rhetorics and never fully present to itself; it is always-already *occupied* and/or contaminated by “written” marks or mere reminders—by technological inscriptions or recordings. Hence, in *Archive Fever* Derrida points out that “the archive . . . will never be either memory or anamnesis as spontaneous, alive and internal experience . . . the archive takes place at the place of originary and structural breakdown of said memory” (11). Indeed, the “archival” marks/recordings of writing have always-already produced memory in its seeming purity and so-called “interiority.” Memory is prosthetic and dependent upon technological (broadly-rhetorical) articulation.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ In “Freud and the Scene of Writing,” Derrida makes the chilling observation that if memory is always-already contaminated and/or produced through its relation to “written” marks, archival marks that are not alive, this means that death has infiltrated the psyche from the outset and oppositions between

To continue following this labyrinthine Derridian thread regarding memory's inescapable machinic technicity, one can turn to Diane Davis, who queries:

Would an authentic, which is to say wholly organic memory be possible outside of the 'machine-like exteriority' of rote memorization? Because if memory depends on inscription, if there is no memory that is not already an effect of technology, in other words, then there is no 'authentic' memory (and so no authentic history), no ['authentic'] recollection or remembrance. (N.p.)

In contrast to Carr, therefore, Davis contends that the notion of "wholly organic" memory is a chimera, for if memory requires rhetorical (machinic) "inscription" in order to call it forth, that is, memory's production requires "technical-assistance" online and off, then something like a purely organic or purely biological memory is a mystification. Thus, as Davis argues elsewhere, it is no longer possible to abide by the framework where "technology gets relegated to an outside (Other) that perfects or endangers the inside (Self)" (*Breaking* 115). Perhaps the reason why there is so much unease at the thought of "outsourcing" memory in the form of digital media, then, is because digitality reveals the "technicity" inherent in memory as such. For as Ekaterina Haskins explains, "'digital memory,' more than any other form of mediation, collapses the assumed distinction

human and machine, life and death, begin to blur. So, indeed, "[f]ar from the machine being a pure absence of spontaneity, its *resemblance* to the psychical apparatus, its existence and its necessity bear witness to the finitude of the mnemonic spontaneity which is thus supplemented. The machine—and, consequently, representation—is death and finitude *within* the psyche" (228).

between modern ‘archival’ memory and traditional ‘lived’ memory by combining the function of storage and ordering on the one hand, and of presence and interactivity on the other” (401-402). So by operating not only archivally, but as a site for dynamic interaction and collaborative participation, digital memory problematizes any insuperable line between “living” and “technological” memory.

Regarding further problematization of the “living”/“technological” binary, Alex Reid points out that “it is an error to imagine human thought as purely internal to an individual self; ... in fact what makes human thought so dynamic and powerful is that it is largely external (or more precisely that the internal/external binary is misleading)” (22). In other words, although memory seems an “individual” and “internal” affair, this is an illusion, for memory could not operate as it does, could not operate at all, without its “technical” or “rhetorical” production by an outside (that is therefore also already inside of “self”), and by archiving itself in the form of recollected marks, writing on paper, encoding in digital environments, and so on.⁴¹ Hence, one can predict the answer Reid has in mind when he asks: “[c]an one draw a boundary between the self and the text somewhere between the fingertips and keyboard, the eye and the screen” (34)? And

⁴¹ Although Reid points out convincingly that “it is our ability to store and process information in spaces outside our body that allows us to engage in the complex thoughts on which consciousness is founded” (25), he also adds (lamentingly) that “our discipline [that is, rhetorical and/or digital studies] has never been able to account for the radical exteriorization of the subject” (24). Such is the curious “contradiction” that rhetorical/digital studies finds itself mired in, and is arguably one significant factor in its current “crisis.”

moreover, this query emphasizes that rather than the relationship of the subject to the digital being one where the subject becomes “externalized,” substituting a technological prosthesis for “organic” memory, as Brian Massumi explains, “[t]he operation in play . . . has to do with *extension* rather than substitution” (126); for example, hyper-extension on social media rather than mere externalization.⁴² So as the chapter shifts focus from the archive in general to specific archives in the form of social media, the question will become how these forms of media prosthetically *extend* memory into digital planes and thereby not only metamorphose memory’s structure, but reproduce the subjectivities of those connected with said extensions.

As an initial example of digital memory extension and the inherent “technicity” and rhetoricity of memory, consider an event central to sparking the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, the violent murder of Khaled Mohamed Said and its subsequent archivization on Facebook and Twitter—an event that reveals how “memory need not inhabit the human brain but [can] be instantiated in physical objects or recording media, distributing memory across cultural networks” (Goodman and Parisi 349). In June of 2010, the twenty-six-year-old Said secretly filmed police in Alexandria, Egypt, in the midst of making a drug deal (Campbell 29). Soon after, Said posted the video on Facebook, and in retribution, members of Hosni Mubarak’s secret police smashed his face in, repeatedly slamming him into a metal door and brick walls in and around an Alexandrian café (29).

⁴² Steve Goodman and Luciana Parisi make a similar point to Massumi by pointing out that “[m]emory has become prosthetic, a neuro-extension that can be archived via uploading and readily accessed via downloading” (343).

The draconian Egyptian regime under Mubarak reported that Said died in custody, choking on a packet of drugs as he attempted to hide them, but a secret post-mortem photo of Said (along with multiple commentaries) appeared on Twitter that proved government reports were erroneous (30):

@monaeltahawy: Impossible to get picture of Khaled Said's corpse out of my head. What a horrific way to die. #Egypt #humanrights

@abo3atef Mourning Khaled Said. Sad and sick brutality by Egyptian police. Where is this country heading to?!!! #Egypt. (Campbell 30)

Moreover, in the wake of Khaled Said's murder, young Google executive Wael Ghonim created a Facebook memorial page in tribute. Although "only" a Facebook page, it prompted an enormous response from activists not only in Egypt, but all over the world, and prompted the Mubarak regime to incarcerate Ghonim himself (244, 251). For as Campbell notes, "[o]rganizers using Facebook Tribute pages channeled the most dangerous of commodities . . . rage" (11).



Fig. 1. “We Are All Khaled Said” Facebook Memorial Page.

Regardless of whatever affective powers they channeled, however, in the case of the Twitter texts and image, as well as the Khaled Said Facebook page, subjects were produced via “hyper-extending” (mournful) memory into and across a digital plane. For although only a single mortician took a photo of Said’s body and a single software executive had initially memorialized Said on social media, the memory of these two subjects immediately metamorphosed and viralized, taking on a new structure, disseminating in innumerable directions at once. Thus, through events of archivization, these subjects did not merely empty their brains of vital riches as Carr might claim. They did not “forget” an experience while substituting “dead” or “machinic” memory for so-called “live” memory. Rather, memory became (re-)produced through the power of digital archiving, and in doing so extended memory to thousands of other subjects,

thereby (re-)producing the subjectivity of those subjects by infusing them with the revolutionary drive to occupy Cairo's Tahrir Square and overthrow the oppressive Mubarak regime.

MEMORY OF THE SWARM

Operating from the premise that the archivization of memory on digital planes indicates not an "externalization," but the "hyper-extension" of an always-already technologized memory, I want now to analyze some specific cases of such archivizations along with how they transform memory's structure and (re-)produce subjectivity. The first instance of memory extension that I will analyze involves the social media application Twitter, an archival technology with the power to facilitate "swarm-memory" formations based on series of short-term rhizomatic connections, and has the capacity to produce revolutionary subjectivity.

I will begin by discussing Twitter's short-term and rhizomatic archival form. For unlike many types of archivization online, Twitter is atypical in that it comprises a "short-term" archive. Tweets recorded online do not remain visible indefinitely, and even during the short time they remain visible, they are often uploaded in such rapid-fire succession as to make one "forget" the content of even relatively recent tweets. Thus, following Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's analysis of short-memory, one might say that tweets possess a certain "splendor," given that they archive short-term ideas whose contents come in explosive flashes of 180 characters or less. Moreover, the archiving of tweets "includes forgetting as a process" because they are likewise gone in a flash

(*Thousand* 16). And since one can describe the archiving of tweets as short-term memory, according to Deleuze and Guattari, this indicates they are of “the rhizome or diagram type” (16).

As Gregory Ulmer explains, the rhizome, a conceptual image based on the growth of a grasses’ roots, is “a model for a new order of memory,” one characterized by “connection,” “heterogeneity,” “multiplicity,” and “rupture” (*Teletheory* 141). This means that a rhizome entails memory-formations structured such that any user/node can connect with any other user/node, the system draws on multiple different subjectivities to function, and there exist communicative lines rather than points,⁴³ except where breakages occur and new lines of transmission spring forth (141). The rhizome is thus a useful image for thinking how archived entries connect within a networked system such as Twitter because anyone with an account can connect to and “retweet” another tweet, radically different users can contribute content, there are *few* centralized hubs within the system, and removal of any given user will not destroy the system as a whole. Each of these features is important, too, because when a subject is produced through hyper-extensively archiving an entry on Twitter, this short-term memory assumes a number of capabilities and features/forms it did not before possess, and these capabilities and

⁴³ Regarding the “absence” of specific points within a networked system, or the notion that points are simply abstracted from lines of communication, Ulmer explains how:

In memory information is organized associationally, so that the ‘address’ of an item is another item related to the first item by its content. Knowledge is not in a place, it is not *there*, except as a ‘ghost’—as the pattern of activity of the whole. (*Heuretics* 216)

features/forms in turn re-produce the subjectivity of the user-subject (for instance, by requiring one limit the content of thoughts to 180 characters). So even if the subject “forgets” the content of a given tweet (or series of tweets), the subjectivity of the user is often reproduced nonetheless.

As an example of the effects produced by hyper-extending memory via archiving (short-term/rhizomatic) content on Twitter, particularly as regards transforming subjectivities, one can turn to the event of “swarming.” As an initial observation, Rita Raley explains how:

[Swarming] is a mode of attack, both a military tactic and a practice of political resistance. . . . The overall aim is *sustainable pulsing*—swarm networks must be able to coalesce rapidly and stealthily on a target, then dissever and redisperse, immediately ready to recombine for a new pulse.

(43)

In relation to Twitter specifically, swarming involves a multitude of users archiving (via short-term/rhizomatic memory) their current positions and the dangers or obstacles they are facing. Then, as every “extended” subject in the multitude draws from the collective archive, their subjectivities are reproduced and they move in accordance with those reproductions, often toward the goal of “pulsing” at a target and eventually disappearing. Hence, as Joss Hands observes, “[t]hese cases demonstrate what the sheer power of cumulative connections can do” (3), and they involve “producing a new kind of collective intelligence” (1)—an intelligence that draws upon the power of what I term *swarm memory*.

I derive the concept of “swarm memory” from Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s discussion of “swarm intelligence,” based on the inference that in order for a collective intellect to function, it must have an archive from it which it draws resources for invention and intervention (what Jan Rune Holmevik calls “inter/vention”⁴⁴). It seems clear as well that when Hardt and Negri develop this concept, they have in mind examples such as Twitter, especially given its rhizomatic structuration. For instance, in *Multitude*, they write that: “[r]ecent researchers in artificial intelligence and computational methods use the term swarm intelligence to name collective and distributed techniques of problem solving without centralized control or the provision of a global model” (91). So in the case of Twitter’s deployment during the Egyptian Revolution, for example, one sees how a multitude solved the problem of reaching and occupying (“pulsating into”) Tahrir Square by collectively and rhizomatically extending memory online (in short-term bursts), producing a shared archive that in turn (simultaneously) reproduced the subjectivities/movements of those who engaged in the archivization:

@Sandmonkey Pudgy plainclothed policemen populating cilantro gam3et
eldowal. My guess is close upper floor is occupied by them.

⁴⁴ For more on the concept of “inter/vention” (as roughly equaling invention plus intervention), see Holmevik’s recently published work on gaming theory by the same title (*Inter/vention: Free Play in the Age of Electracy*).

@Sandmonkey @Sarahngb At least 8 CS trucks infront of Mostafa

Mahmood mosque #Jan25. A LOT of Policemen. (Campbell 50)

Through the co-archiving of such tweets, in Hardt and Negri's words, Egyptian revolutionaries became "a seemingly amorphous multiplicity that [could] strike at a single point from all sides or disperse in the environment so as to become almost invisible" (57). And the revolutionaries accomplished this feat without a centralized leadership or a preexisting model for accomplishing their goal. Rather, they were simply "an irreducible plurality of [archival-]nodes in communication with each other" (83).

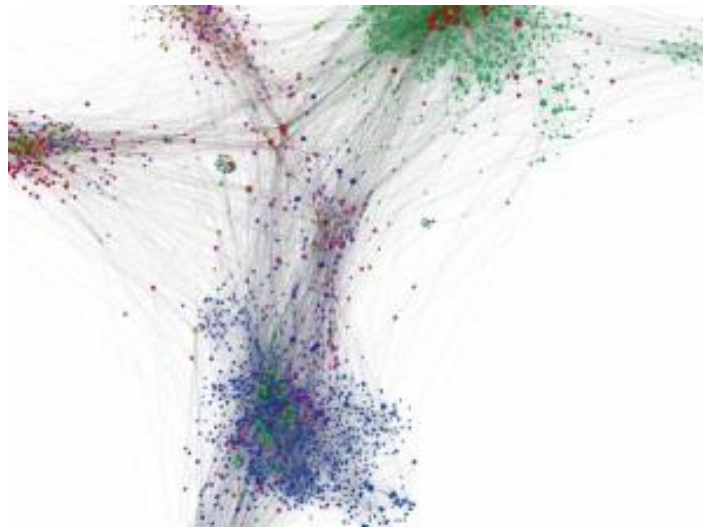


Fig. 2. Diagram of Tweets/Retweets from the Egyptian Revolution.

Although relatively "simple," through this radical form of communication/intelligence facilitated by short-term rhizomatic archivization, as

Campbell notes, “[i]n 18 days, Twitter went from a tool used primarily by and for self-indulgent techies, to a powerful counter-block to a repressive regime’s attempts to shut down all opposition” (14). And moreover, the application showed how the subjectivities of thousands might be transformed/reproduced through the digital archival activities of a few.

As for some specifics as to how Egyptian revolutionaries deployed their “hyper-extended” and archival swarm memory to accomplish their goals, Campbell explains how “[m]any times throughout that first day of protest the Tweets indicated the youth were moving toward various bridges. It became clear following the timeline that many police bought the bait as the bridges were fortified but the youth headed to another location” (47). So not only did revolutionaries deploy their archive of rhizomatic short-term memory to reach and occupy Tahrir Square, they actively deceived Mubarak regime authorities by masking which tweets were legitimate. They were, if one stretches the concept a bit, producing a series of what Freud calls “screen memories,” but in a manner that deceived others rather than themselves.⁴⁵ Thus, such a case provides a clear example of what Hardt and Negri mean when they say that, although a swarm may look chaotic

⁴⁵ Campbell provides multiple examples of Egypt’s revolutionaries deceiving authorities through the use of technology, but one of the most noteworthy is when he writes that:

What tipped me off to the elaborateness of their planning were the many tweets that [first] evening, especially the picture of the Hawaii 5-0 style speedboat whisking @Sandmonkey away along the Nile River. They deliberately wanted the police to think they were headed anywhere but towards Tahrir (Liberation) Square. (54)

from the outside due to an absence of centralized authority, “[i]f one looks inside a network, however, one can see that it is indeed organized, rational, and creative” (91). And networks achieve such levels of organization and rational creativity partially through inventive recourse to an integral rhizomatic series of short-term archival entries dynamically interlinked with one another.

THE DEAD STREAM: A BOY AND HIS MACHINE

In this section, I investigate how memory’s structure is transformed through the hyper-extensive “prosthesis” of live streaming video along with the reproductions of subjectivity it entails. In doing so, I strive to provisionally answer Ulmer’s question: “[w]hat happens to human memory when, in addition to the prosthesis it already possesses (alphabetic writing), it gains the services of electronics (specifically, of video)” (*Teletheory* 133)?⁴⁶ One question that likely initially arises here, however, is why “live” streaming video is indeed an archival prosthesis, for is not “live” video precisely *live*, and therefore exhibits a “presence” with regard to its events/objects that recorded video does not? Provided my emphasis on the idea that “live” memory is always-already contaminated by its “technological” or “rhetorical” prostheses, and given that live streaming video requires a machine to function, one can likely guess how I answer such a

⁴⁶ For Ulmer, memory is always-already prosthetic, always-already technological/rhetorical. So it seems he would agree that the subject who archives its memory is not merely “forgetting,” substituting a “dead” apparatus for so-called “live” memory, but rather (metamorphically) hyper-extending its memory onto a digital plane.

question. But rather than proceed on presumptions, I want to explain why the term “live video” is in fact a misnomer, and show why it instead constitutes a form of archive through which subjects are produced by hyper-extending memory; and moreover, that through this “seamless” integration of “human” and “machinic” memory-forms, subjects can reproduce themselves and others.

In order to show why the term “*live* streaming video” is problematic, and that it instead indicates an event whereby a subject is produced by archiving/hyper-extending memory onto a digital plane, I turn again to that magician of memory, Henri Bergson. For one can apply Bergson’s insights regarding the always-already mnesic quality of perception to the perception of machines (such as cameras) as well. Recall, Bergson notes that there is an interval “between matter itself and our conscious perception of matter” (27), that is, there is an imperceptible instant where materiality unfolds or *becomes* faster than the subject can experience it—“perception” is *belated*. By the time the subject “perceives” anything, it is in fact already “remembering” an event that has taken place. Hence, Bergson contends “we never perceive anything but our immediate past, . . . consciousness of the present is already memory” (195). The perception of a camera is no different, for even as the camera rolls, materiality is unrolling an instant ahead of it; therefore the camera is “merely” recording whatever occurs. So even in the case of so-called “live” video, one is still watching a recording, an idea that becomes clearer when there is significant distance between the camera and the subject watching its supposedly “live” feed. Watching a “live-feed” is not in any way different from watching a recording

of the newscast a week later—both are instances of recording or archiving. Differences between “live” and “recorded” video are different only in degree and not in kind.

Thus, regardless of whether one is describing the memory of subjects or cameras, Deleuze’s observation in *Bergsonism* holds that “[t]here are no longer, there can no longer be, anything but differences in degree between recollection-images and perception-images” (73). In other words, even the most seemingly “immediate” of experiences and/or most “immediate” capturing of events by cameras are always-already recordings, their structure is always-already “technically” and “rhetorically” inscribed; it is only that some perception-recollections are temporally “closer” to the events they record. So in response to this observation, the need perhaps becomes apparent for a concept of “*dead* streaming video,” given that video inescapably requires recourse to a technical apparatus and is never perfectly present to that which it records—a characterization that, rather uncannily, describes human memory as well.

For an example of a subject produced through archivally/transformatively hyper-extending its memory in the form of “dead” streaming video, an event that in turn reproduces the subject in question along with the subjectivities of others as they link up to the archived flow, one can turn to Occupy Wall Street cameraman Timothy Pool. A one-time documentarian of extreme skating competitions, Pool joined the Occupy Movement at its inception and thereafter recorded thousands of hours of event footage accompanied by his own critical commentary. His feeds of events such as marches on Wall Street and the eviction of Occupy from Zuccotti Park have been rebroadcast around the world, appearing via numerous news outlets such as NBC, Al Jazeera, and Time. His

streams therefore provide an outstanding example of what Raley calls “tactical media,” provided that such media “records a memory of performance” (12), in this case, a series of activist demonstrations/occupations striving to draw attention to economic inequality and social injustice.



Fig. 3. Timothy Pool, Occupy Wall Street Cameraman.

Zeroing in on the complex questions of Pool’s “prosthetic” relationship to his camera, its transformation of memory’s structure, and the archival hyper-extension it enables, one can begin with Massumi’s intriguing observation that “[the] body and its objects [are] prostheses of *each other*, and . . . matter itself [is] prosthetic” (127). Thus, not only is the camera a prosthetic extension of Pool’s memory, but his own memory is a prosthetic extension of the camera’s recording capabilities. In support of this uncanny observation, Hayles notes that “the posthuman view thinks of the body as the original prosthesis we all learn to manipulate, so that extending or replacing the body with other

prostheses becomes a continuation of a process that began before we were born” (3). This is not to suggest that the (singular) body is a fleshly prosthesis of some originary “self” or “soul,”⁴⁷ but rather that the body and its functions—like memory—are *machinic* and can only function in relation to other machines that form connections with them (such as other bodies, devices, and so on). In other words, a prosthesis does not replace something more “original” or “pure,” but is on ontological par with what it replaces or extends, and the prosthetic relation is bi-directional in that what the prosthesis connects with becomes a prosthesis of the prosthesis. This is why Hayles contends that “the posthuman view configures human being so that it can be seamlessly articulated with intelligent machines” (3), such as when a camera’s recordings and Pool’s memory become prostheses of one another. However, one must exercise caution here, because Hayles’ idea is not at all tantamount to what Brook describes as “the cyberpunk fantasy that suggests we will someday be able to leave our physical selves behind for cyberspace” (“Forgetting” 781), in other words, that hyper-extension of memory online through prosthetic devices presages the futuristic archiving of human existence entirely in digital reality. Rather, as Hayles herself notes, “it is not a question of leaving the body behind but rather of extending embodied awareness in highly specific, local, and material ways that would be impossible without electronic prosthesis” (290-291)—such as when Pool

⁴⁷ Rather than implying the existence of an enduring “self” or “soul,” Avital Ronell contends that “[t]he prosthesis, capable of surviving the body which it in part replaces, acts already as commemorative monument to the dissolution of a mortal coil” (89). This is to say that the prosthesis is instead a “monumental” indicator of mortality and finitude, the inevitability of death. Itself.

extends his perception-recollection of activist events/practices via streaming video to thousands of viewers.

Beyond the observation that one can hyper-extend memory onto a digital plane via relationships to archival machines/prostheses, along with the notion that such relations are bi-directional, what does it look like more specifically when streaming video extends the memory of subjects beyond their typical parameters? For instance, what does the “seamless” integration of a subject’s memory and a camera’s recordings look like? In order to answer this question, one can return to Bergson, who writes: “there is no perception which is not full of memories. With the immediate and present data of our senses we mingle a thousand details out of our past experience” (24). For Bergson, whenever one has an experience, this seemingly “live” perception is already saturated with myriad recollections that provide the structural conditions of possibility for said experience (hence the hyphenated term “perception-recollection”⁴⁸). This is one reason why Bergson contends that memory is produced with a “view to utility” (70), because “memory” is constantly interposing itself into “experience” in order to produce it and yield certain situational responses. Significantly, one can find an uncanny instance of this interpenetration of perception and recollection by looking at Pool’s relationship to his camera. For as Pool’s camera rolls, capturing activists in the process of vocalizing dissent

⁴⁸ Bergson illuminates the concept of “perception-recollection” through his remark that “any memory-image that is capable of interpreting our actual perception inserts itself so thoroughly into it that we are no longer able to discern what is perception and what is memory” (125). So in any “experience,” one is never certain what part of the assemblage is memory from the past or a “memory of the ‘present.’”

at the hegemony of Capital and Empire, Pool is also typically providing commentary. Thus, as the camera's recordings function as "perceptions" of activist events, ones intimately connected to/extending Pool's own "perceptions," Pool's commentary interpenetrates the camera's recordings; his own memory (especially as it is produced by discourse) "completes" the camera's memory as it is broadcast to a multitude of other subjects. In other words, by the time one watches streaming video of Pool's Occupy feeds, one is watching a "seamlessly" interwoven assemblage of the camera's recordings (an extension of Pool's gaze) as it is combined with Pool's memory of the scene articulated in discourse. Pool's memory and the camera's recordings become thoroughly contaminated with one another as they hyper-extend toward other subjects, and these subjects are reproduced by this hybrid memory as they watch the feed. The memory of these subjects is thus technologically iterated as well.

Before moving forward, I want to say some more about the reconceptualization of subjectivity Pool's prosthetic memory extension entails. For Pool's feeds not only have the power to reproduce subjectivities, mobilizing them by providing audio-visual access to harrowing events. The hyper-extension of Pool's memory implies a reconceptualization of the nature of subjectivity as such; it entails the existence of cyborg-subjects whose memory, Ronell explains, "recodes the philosophical opposition of life/death, body/machine" (89). Indeed, that Pool "seamlessly" integrates his memory with that of a machine, and that viewers of Pool's archival stream link up to the flow that this integration produces, suggests that memory is deeply machinic and technological/rhetorical. At the beginning of the chapter, I discussed this idea from a

theoretical angle, but I want now to take it up from another given that it has a distinctly ethico-political ramification.

Initially, I argued that memory is inescapably related to technicity and rhetoricity, and that one should critique the notion that memory is an “immediate” encounter with events. However, what else does it suggest about subjectivity if memory is *machinic*, or as Colebrook argues, that “[t]here is no aspect of life that is not machinic; all life only works and *is* insofar as it connects with some other machine” (56)? Briefly, what I think Colebrook’s point entails is that memory is never spontaneous or self-generating; in order for memory to function and guide a subject’s behavior, it must first have a specific program. Or as Deleuze and Guattari put it, “every machine has a sort of code built into it, stored up inside it” (*Anti-Oedipus* 38). For instance, in order for a subject to be capable of inventing or communicating something of value within the current political economy, this subject must first have its memory “programmed” with a certain code (via education), and must access specific communicative channels (via analog social networks). Indeed, as Derrida explains, “the machine does not run by itself” (*Writing* 227), and so without the machinic programming/coding of memory or its linking up with specific networks, subjects will never miraculously become “productive members of society,” nor become capable of “pulling up their bootstraps.” In other words, to expect a machine to suddenly and spontaneously become capable of *anything* without being given the memory-programming and connections to do so first is pure mystification. This is why Hayles points out that:

[T]he posthuman does not really mean the end of humanity. It signals instead the end of a certain conception of the human, a conception that may have applied, at best, to that fraction of humanity who has the wealth, power, and leisure to conceptualize themselves as autonomous beings exercising their will through individual agency and choice. (286)

In other words, if one takes up the posthuman position that memory is a machine, this does not imply some pessimistic or deterministic view of human behavior. Instead, it highlights the misguided audacity in claiming that it is through individual “will” and hard work that subjects move beyond their socio-economic positions. For without the proper “programming” of memory through pedagogical means, or the linking up of memory through analog social networks, the cyborg-subject has no hope of ever becoming more/other than it is.⁴⁹ Indeed, it is only through a prior programming that invention and innovation are possible; the potential/hope for difference always requires a repetition.

MEME-ORY: RIP, MIX, BURN (REPEAT)

In this section, I want to look at one final instance of the digital hyper-extension/restructuration of memory and the re-productions of subjectivity it entails—archived “viral” memes and the inventive/collaborative processes of “rip-mix-burn” by which they come into existence. A “meme” is an image or other media that spreads

⁴⁹ As Colebrook notes, “[a] machinic becoming makes a connection with what is not itself in order to transform and maximize itself” (57). So without its connections (as well as memory “programming”), the cyborg-subject has no hope of ever becoming more/other than it is.

across the Internet by being repeatedly reposted and archived on sites like Twitter, Facebook, tumblr., and so on. During the process of being repeated/reposted, there is typically a transformation of the meme as it spreads, for instance, by changing the “foreground” texts that accompany a particular “background” image. A meme is therefore a ceaselessly evolving digital memory-image that is the result of productive, mutative differences. Hence the term “meme” itself, which derives from the ancient Greek word *mimeme*, meaning “something imitated,” a term that inspired evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins to devise the term “meme” in order to conceptualize the spread of cultural artifacts (“Internet Meme” N.p.). So just as a gene is a form of biological memory that spreads throughout a population, repeated with differences each successive generation, a meme operates according to a similar generative principle, though online—leading to my development of the neologism “meme-ory.”

However, how does a meme indicate an artifact/event where a subject is produced by “hyper-extending” memory online, and in doing so transforms memory’s structure (and content) along with reproducing the subjectivities of those who view it? In other words, why employ the term “meme-ory,” what characterizes “rip-mix-burn” processes, and how are these processes persuasive? Reid provides an insightful series of answers to such questions, so I will begin with his observation in *The Two Virtuals* that: “[t]he topological unfolding of thought is a . . . process in which cognitive content is ‘ripped’ from materiality via sensory organs, ‘mixed’ with other content including memory, and ‘burned’ into language at the conscious level” (130). What Reid means here is that the rip-mix-burn process is a useful image for conceptualizing rhetorical invention as such

(especially regarding the necessity of archives/memory), and so is “not simply about *new media* composition” (157). The process begins when subjectivity is produced through initially recording an experience, and in Bergsonian fashion, this initial recording gets combined with an existing “whole” of memory. In turn, a new memory is formed and articulated in language or other rhetorics, and is archived on diverse media both online and off. Moreover, when a subject is produced by hyper-extending “burned” memory onto a digital plane, say, on social media websites, other subjects can then re-initiate the inventional process by “ripping” the burned digital media, combining (“mixing”) it with other media/memory, and “burning” once more in the form of media that evinces memory’s inherently collaborative and inter-relational structure.⁵⁰

I want now to introduce an example that should help clarify the forces/processes at issue, for I am interested in showing how through the archivization of memes (or “meme-ory”) that a subject’s memory can be hyper-extended/metamorphosed, and radically transform itself and others through the collaborative processes of rip-mix-burn. On November 18, 2011, at the University of California, Davis, student Occupy activists responded to the destruction of their on-campus encampment and the arrests of protesters by sitting in a busy pathway with locked arms so as to hamper police movement through the area. Incensed with the blockade, Lieutenant John Pike of the UCD-PD proceeded to

⁵⁰ Regarding archives, Haskins argues that “[i]t is one thing to collect and digitize large quantities of memorial artifacts; it is quite another to display them in ways that stimulate not only spectatorship but also meaningful participation” (408). In step, I would argue that collaboratively-produced memes are an excellent example of archives that simulate participation.

unload a can of military-grade pepper spray directly into the faces of the sitting students to shouts of “Shame on you!” The pepper-sprayed students were then torn from the ground and arrested (unable to wash their faces), and some were even dragged away unconscious. Lawsuits later followed that resulted in students winning a significant settlement.



Fig. 4. Lieutenant Pike Pepper Sprays UC-Davis Students.

With regard to the initial scene of the UC-Davis incident, one can see the process of “rip-mix-burn” taking place, even prior to the above image becoming part of an explicitly machinic/digital online process involving the hyper-extension of memory. Concerning the initial “rip,” as Reid notes, “[such] is the act of the sensorium, of exposure to an outside” (N.p.), so in the case above, this entails exposure to the pepper-spraying incident and the subject’s sensory recordings of it. After this initial rip/recording, the experience of the event is assembled with affect, discourse, and other

forces, such that the ripped image is “opened up,” so to speak, as one considers the nearly endless assemblages it might eventually produce. For instance, consider Jeff Rice’s observation that “[t]he pepper-spray photograph brings together a present-time image . . . with a series of images not present” (367). Finally, a new perception-recollection image is born as it “burned” into a fresh assemblage, thus becoming an object “capable of establishing [its] own interactions” (Reid N.p.). This newly burned memory image/assemblage has the power re-produce subjectivity, whether one considers the force of the Pike image to discourage dissent via “burning in” a “mnemotechnical” (Nietzschean) regard for pain (See *Breaking Up* 172, 201), or via the image’s capacity to inspire future rebellion and resistance to apparatuses of discipline and control.

However, after an initially analog, though still thoroughly “technological”/“machinic” process of rip-mix-burn (as the UC-Davis event is remembered/recorded by subjects and cameras), what happens once memory of the “event” is ultimately hyper-extended via digital archivization? In the case of the UC-Davis incident specifically, after various subjects uploaded images of Lt. Pike pepper-spraying the student Occupiers, something intriguing occurred regarding the process of rip-mix-burn. In retribution for the flagrant brutality of Pike’s action, subjects sympathetic with the Occupy Movement began “ripping” Pike’s image from its original context, only to inventively “mix” it with new contexts and “burn”/archive new images to significant rhetorical effect. After this occurred dozens of times, the result was a full-blown archive christened the “Causally Pepper-Spray Everything Cop Meme”—an archive that Rice points out, invokes “a collective memory regarding protest, . . . a

network—the association and connection of various agents outside of the image itself, but present in collective memory so that enthymemic moments occur” (367). For example, in one specific case archived on the “Cop Meme,” a subject took a recorded image of the Pike event that had been uploaded (“burned”), and then Photoshopped (“ripped”) Lt. Pike’s image out of it. The subject then took Pike’s image and via some inventive “mixing” placed it directly in the middle of John Trumbull’s famous painting *The Declaration of Independence* (1776). The result is a newly “burned”/archived image, where the initially recorded image of the UC-Davis event became metamorphosed and re-extended, while infused with the power to reproduce subjectivity. And this reproduction of subjectivity is a complex one, due not only to its capacity to politically mobilize subjects through a visual rhetorical appeal/enthymeme regarding activism and police brutality (recalling an extensive collective memory of American and global protest), but enacts a cultural “working through” of trauma via a series of humorous repetitions.



Fig. 5. Lieutenant Pike Pepper Sprays the US Constitution.

With regard to subjectivity's reproduction as evidenced by specific political mobilizations, the remixed Pike image shows how, through a subject uploading or hyper-extending its memory, other subjects can "mix" or "riff on" this memory so as to produce a new (counter-) memory that can incite action. As I have suggested, this rip-mix-burn process occurs both online and off, scrambling the distinction between "live" and "machinic" memory. As per why remixing memory is so rhetorically effective, though, Lawrence Lessig argues that: "For anyone who has lived in our era, a mix of images and sounds makes its point far more powerfully than any eight-hundred-word essay in the *New York Times* could. . . . It doesn't assert the truth. It shows it. And once it is shown, no one can escape its mimetic effect" (100). In other words, rather than simply state: "Lt. Pike stands as a quintessential figure of repression and the horrors of excessive police force," one *shows* this (or something like it) through a plethora of media until it sticks,

and one does so by repeatedly hyper-extending/metamorphosing specific subjects' memories in order to produce multitudes of equally politically-outraged subjects.⁵¹ Remixes/memes thus have significant force when it comes to persuasively transforming the subjectivity of subjects and spurring them to adopt specific socio-political views, and they attain this force not only through a metamorphic extension and mutation of memory, but through the power of repetition itself.

Indeed, it is worth highlighting that the rhetorical force of remixing hyper-extended/archived memory, a force that comes especially to the fore in the case of memes, accumulates via *repetition*, and this is significant given that repetition can gradually transform subjectivity by easing the sting of trauma. As Deleuze notes, “[a]ll cure is a voyage to the bottom of repetition” (*Difference* 19), and this means repeatedly installing oneself in the past through the vehicle of memory in order to confront what has occurred. As an instance of this form of therapeutic repetition, consider that through the “Cop Meme” repeating Pike’s image in dozens of different contexts (such as in *The Wizard of Oz*, on the cover of Pink Floyd’s *Dark Side of the Moon*, in the ring with Muhammad Ali, and so on), one facilitates repeated exposure to an event that might otherwise be too traumatic to face. Thus, the remixing of hyper-extended/archived

⁵¹ As Lessig notes, “[r]emix is also and often . . . a strategy to excite ‘interest-based learning’” (106), so part of remixing’s value is found in its pedagogical efficacy. For although one could certainly discuss with students memes/the UC-Davis event without the “Pepper-Spray Cop Meme,” the meme-archive and those like it can draw students in more effectively and ignite the reproduction of subjectivity that effective learning entails.

memory is a potentially therapeutic undertaking, one with the power to heal specific (sub-)cultures/multitudes. And although one might suggest, following Freud, that such overtly-humorous undertakings are mere sublimations meant to mask/efface the traumatic event, there is also another way to view them, particularly with regard to Nietzsche's conception of affirmative forgetting.

As Vivian notes, "[r]epetition . . . reveals the pervasive work of communal forgetting in producing cultural forms of memory and the material practices that perpetuate them" (114). This is to suggest, for instance, that by repeating Pike's image again and again, remixing the hyper-extended, digitized memory of his violence, this undertaking opens up the possibility for "forgetting" such violence in the sense of re-describing it, re-thinking it, and keeping its question open in such a way that might produce a healthier attitude toward it. In other words, the digital remixing of memory (which includes forgetting as a process) reveals how pliant memory is in general, how open it is to processes of revision that allow one to adopt new (perhaps more affirmative—that is the hope) attitudes towards events. Or as Vivian puts it, such repetition/"forgetting" allows one to "forget the past in order to repeat its mythic invention" (117). This does not mean, for example, forgetting the UC-Davis event so as to relegate it to oblivion, but rather, that via the repetition of remixed memory one might "forget" the event as it was initially "burned," freeing it up such that it might be "re-burned" and repurposed. Such is the differential power of "forgetting" entailed in repetition, and it is thus to forgetting that I now turn.

DIGITAL FORGETTING AND THE RISK/PROMISE OF NETWORKED MULTITUDES

After discussing multiple cases wherein subjects were produced by hyper-extensively archiving memory on a digital plane, thereby reproducing subjectivities, I will conclude the chapter by analyzing what happens when subjects are produced via *an-archivally* “retracting”⁵² memory, that is, what happens when they “delete” or “forget.” What I am interested in specifically is an *active* forgetting, a forgetting that one assertively pursues and is not merely a by-product of one’s online undertakings.⁵³ I will also show how the need for an-archivization or “forgetting” often comes about due to digital memory’s dangers. However, I will conclude by arguing that in the face of danger certain forms of digital archival connectivity are worth the risk, as they initiate the formation of networked multitudes of subjectivities with the power to achieve significant social and political ends.

Regarding the need for *an-archivization* to accompany strategies for remembering online, Viktor Mayer-Schönberger points out that, “[t]oday, with the help of widespread

⁵² By employing/developing the term “retraction,” I mean to introduce a mate for Bergson’s concept of “contraction,” the process whereby memory is formed with regard to a subject’s interests.

⁵³ Another pitfall worth pointing out is the hubris entailed in believing oneself a *master* of technology, that is, that one can simply withdraw from technology through an act of will. As Davis points out, this is problematic because “[w]e do not *possess* technology; on the contrary, it is in modern technology that we are *dispossessed*. Human Being is possessed by *technology* inasmuch as technology has begun to bring the human into Being” (*Breaking* 120). In other words, techno-resistance requires struggle, especially as technology increasingly produces one’s subjectivity and existence.

technology, forgetting has become the exception, and remembering the default” (2). Unfortunately, this ubiquity of remembering via the power of digital media and other technologies is far from wholly benign. For as Mayer-Schönberger explains, memory’s pervasiveness unfortunately leads not only to a glut of information where one finds oneself lost in a sea of data, but more importantly, it can lead to a frightening degree of Orwellian surveillance the likes of which has never been seen before, where a significant portion of one’s life is exposed to the eyes of others and held up to scrutiny.

Although I will focus here primarily on the question of forgetting in relation to surveillance, it is worth turning briefly to Brooke’s remarks on memory and the problem of information overload. He notes that: “[i]n the face of this immense knowledge, and at a time when there is so much we *can* know, we must begin to ask the question of how much we *should* know. A posthuman rhetoric should prove indispensable to us as we form such a question” (“Forgetting” 792). Through his remark, Brooke highlights the need for “forgetting” with regard to accessing too much information, and he suggests specific transformations in subjectivity that come about when subjects retract memory from digital spaces in response to this problem. For example, following Hayles, he analyzes the concept of “persistence” (an abbreviation for “the persistence of cognition”), and discusses how, instead of trying to take in everything, a subject can actively permit itself to “forget” certain portions of what it perceives-recollects online by forming patterns or making useful generalizations (*Lingua* 156-157). Thus, through an-archiving practices, that is, “forgetting” or the refusal of memory, a subject is produced via the

discerning collection of information, and more adept at getting the gist of an event as it is recorded online on numerous sites.

Beyond concerns regarding overload, however, an-archivization or “forgetting to become posthuman,” as Brooke puts it, has revolutionary implications involving resistance to surveillance and control. Indeed, it appears that the subject who retracts memory from a digital plane often increasingly has the power to elude punishment and coercion by, if one will forgive the Deleuzian pun, “becoming-imperceptible.” According to Mayer-Schönberger, such a becoming is important because “[w]ith digital memory, a significant part of one’s remaining power over information dissipates and is redistributed to the millions with network access” (102). In other words, just as the hyper-extension of memory can evoke the production of revolutionary forces like swarms, archives can spread one’s information to those who have no desire to see transformations to the existing order and may actively resist social reform/resistance. For instance, Mayer-Schönberger points out that:

Instead of protecting citizens from overbearing surveillance and memory, policy makers are compelling private sector data collectors to perfect the digital memory of all of us, and keep it easily accessible for public agencies from the intelligence community to law enforcement. (9)

Indeed, through arrangements between the political sphere and corporate sphere, memory has become a commodity given that information on users has significant exchange-value. What this means, therefore, is that rather than protecting privacy rights, practically every

move a subject makes online is archived,⁵⁴ and is archived so as to suit the ends of Capital and control via law enforcement. What this means in turn, then, is that the subject who retracts its memory from digital spaces becomes increasing “imperceptible,” and less likely to feel the sting of economic exploitation or the anxiety of being watched. In other words, at least in some important sense, an “imperceptible” subject is also a “free” subject. This is obviously important, for as Mayer-Schönberger notes, “[i]f we replace the trust in our past with the trust in digital memory, dictatorial regimes will no longer have to control our minds. Controlling the externalized memory of our collective past will suffice” (121). So in this instance, “forgetting” or an-archival processes take on an increased exigency, especially since Mayer-Schönberger suggests that only a few isolated subjects becoming-imperceptible is not enough; a more over-arching “forgetting” is necessary with regard to digital memory in order to elude the horrors of fascism and authoritarianism.

As an instance of the desire for digital “forgetting” and an-archiving, and as an instance of the potential transformations of subjectivity it can bring about, consider the

⁵⁴ Regarding the archivization of practically every move a subject makes online, Mayer-Schönberger points out that: “[i]f Foucault were still alive today, he would certainly write about digital remembering as an effective mechanism of panoptic control, both supporting the control in hierarchical organizations and societies, as well as finding support in them, thus cementing and deepening the existing (unequal) distribution of power” (112). In other words, the hyper-extension of memory opens one up to increasing surveillance, and this allows draconian mechanisms of control to maintain their grip and reinforce existing power-relations.

wide-spread outcry on January 18th, 2012, against the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and the Protect IP Act (PIPA). Many perceived these pieces of legislation as facilitating overreaching Web surveillance in the name of catching copyright violators and as having the potential to promote the censorship of websites without due process. Thus, actions against SOPA and PIPA marked the largest Internet protest in history, and over one billion users viewed anti-SOPA messages on January 18th, 2012. Over a hundred thousand websites supported the protest including Google,⁵⁵ Craigslist, Wordpress, Pinterest, Flickr, and Wikipedia, and over fifty thousand blocked access to their websites through content “blackouts.” In other words, the event entailed the most massive desire for an-archivization (or “forgetting”) in history, and perhaps the most forceful wish for the multitude to become-imperceptible.

⁵⁵ In a sense, it is ironic that sites like Google participated in the SOPA and PIPA protests, given that they themselves operate as agents of surveillance. For as Mayer-Schönberger points out, “[i]n the spring of 2007, Google conceded that until then it had stored every single search query entered by one of its users, and every single search result a user subsequently clicked on to access it” (6).



Fig. 6. Wikipedia Protests SOPA and PIPA on its Homepage.

Moreover, it appears that through the desire for an-archivization and/or “forgetting” the wide-spread protests of SOPA and PIPA entailed significant reproductions of global subjectivity. For as anti-SOPA and anti-PIPA actions spread across the Web, this movement seemed to feed (as well as be fed by) the revolutionary fire that was spreading not only throughout the US, but around the world, due to global protest movements like Occupy and others. In other words, given the act of dissent or refusal that so many engaged in during the Internet protests, this collective desire for an-archivization or “the right to be forgotten” seemed to provide a springboard that facilitated subjects across the globe to get increasingly interested/involved in the broader protest movements that were already taking place. In short, here the want for “forgetting” produced a multitude of subjects with increasingly revolutionary aspirations.

In conclusion, therefore, I want to take up the question of revolutionary aspirations, and contend that although the ubiquity of digital memory/archives has left subjects increasingly open to surveillance and control, exposing oneself to these forces often seems indispensable if one is to enact social and political change. Moreover, although this exposure to power is frightening,⁵⁶ one can rest assured that one will not have to endure it alone, for in order to affect widespread transformations, memory will have to become increasingly *networked* in its archival hyper-extensions. What such networked archival formations look like, however, how they deploy both memory/archiving and forgetting/an-archiving in the service of building a new world, *is in question*. Yet it is a pressing ethico-political question that calls one to take it up, even in the face of terrible danger, and thus one hears the faint echo of Martin Heidegger whispering: “The closer we come to danger, the more brightly do the ways into the saving power [of technology] begin to shine and the more questioning we become” (35).

Along these lines, Hardt and Negri’s thoughts on the networked formation of the political multitude are instructive. They write that “[t]he multitude . . . might thus be conceived as a network: an open and expansive network in which all differences can be expressed freely and equally, a network that provides the means of encounter so that we

⁵⁶ Regarding the frightening power of digital surveillance/memory, Campbell mentions how during the Egyptian Revolution “[s]ome commentators wondered if social media, instead of being an organizing tool for the youth, was perhaps also tipping off the police” (44). And he adds that at the height of the Egyptian Revolution itself, “[t]he level of fear and paranoia was palpable amongst protesters because they feared infiltration from Government via social media. They knew they were being tracked” (142).

can work and live in common” (*Multitude* xiv). Although it is unclear here whether Hardt and Negri are talking about a network of analog (singular) bodies or how these bodies might hyper-extensively interact on a digital plane, what matters is that the image of the network as a space for freely expressing difference and producing wealth without exploitation is inspirational; it provides a vision of what archival nodes connecting in rhizomatic fashion might be capable of becoming. Indeed, as T.V. Reid points out, “[s]ome activists suggest that the structure of the network is itself a model of what ‘globalization from below’ might look like” (271), a model where the archiving of memory transforms subjects so as to be capable of new relations of communication and production, and where “the external boundaries of the network are open such that new nodes and new relationships can always be added” (*Multitude* xv). Moreover, if the need arises in order to confront a particular oppositional power (or powers), portions of the network can “become-imperceptible,” that is, become an-archivally “forgotten” so as to elude control. For as Hardt and Negri note:

Since it has no center and almost any portion can operate as an autonomous whole, the network can continue to function even when part of it has been destroyed. The same design element that ensures survival, the decentralization, is also what makes control of the network so difficult.

(299)

So whether it is a question of subjectivities linking up through digital archives (via social networks) in order to express differences or produce wealth, or regards subjectivities an-archivally “deleting” themselves in order to elude control, such processes contain more

than a grain of revolutionary potential, perhaps even a “saving power,” whatever shape it might take.

As per what shape(s) a multitudinous archival formation might take, however, this question has only been recently raised and so it is important not to foreclose upon it. This is especially the case because as Ulmer points out, “[t]here is no inevitability, no technological determinism leading to some dystopian (or utopian) future social condition” (*Heuretics* 23).⁵⁷ That is, there is no guarantee that such networked archival formations entail something ultimately desirable. Perhaps all one can do, then, is point out how archives/an-archivization, when functioning as “tactical media,” “gestur[e] only obliquely toward a better world in the future” (Raley 27), and recall that this “better world” will not come about all at once in a grand moment of eschatological spectacle (46). So if one desires to keep the question concerning digital archives and the revolutionary hyper-extension of memory open, one must expose oneself to a future that is radically unforeseeable. For as Derrida notes, “the question of the archive is not, we repeat, a question of the past . . . It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow” (*Archive* 36). Thus, I log off with an ear cocked to the future, recalling the promise of its

⁵⁷ T.V. Reid echoes Ulmer’s ambivalence regarding technological futures when he explains that: Activists are not among the naïve utopian technological determinists who see the Internet as the world’s savior. Rather, they see it as a site of struggle where with mobility, flexibility, imagination, and daring they may actually have some tactical advantage over their stodgy, bureaucracy-bound opponents. (277)

radical indetermination, and the future of the archive as it is radically *to come*, indeterminate, unknowable (70, 72). For what the networked archive and the corresponding archive of subjectivity might eventually become, it is impossible to say, but nevertheless, it will surely *become*.

Chapter #4 – Stiller Than Still: Monumental Bodies and the Challenge of Common Memory

[E]verything must metamorphose into a thing in order to break the catastrophic spell of things.

-- Theodor Adorno, "A Portrait of Walter Benjamin"

All that is general or public must be reappropriated and managed by the multitude and thus become common.

-- Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude*

Today, in both rhetorical studies and memory studies, when one sets out to investigate memory in its "collective," "social," "communal" or generally shared forms, one typically encounters two distinct limitations. First, an interest in monuments mostly leaves one investigating statues, memorials, and other "permanent" structures made of stone, steel, and so on, and second, these studies have little recourse to any other discourses besides those of *public* memory. These methodological/discursive limitations are unfortunate because they leave one ill-equipped to consider the "monumental" rhetorical effects that (singular) bodies engaged in specific visual, social practices or certain temporary structures are capable of producing. Moreover, such limits cloud one's eyes to the possibility that if one is not talking about so-called "private" or "personal" remembrance, there may yet exist another option for describing such events beyond the

discourses of public memory. The epigraphs above are therefore intended to indicate a new way forward—a line of flight—within the rhetoric of memory studies. Adorno suggests that not only can a body or temporary structure “become-monumental,” emitting the rhetorical effects of a monument (a thing), but he highlights the ethico-political exigency for doing so; that is, to protest the “catastrophic” objectification and commodification of all life and being. In turn, Hardt and Negri suggest a novel way to describe the event of becoming-monumental by deploying the rhetoric of “the common,” a complex concept that has nothing to do with sameness or identification, but rather, the production of places and spaces, zones or territories, wherein bodies can democratically organize and articulate their recollected experiences and differences freed from the fetters of political figures or monuments that profess to represent them. Thus, in what follows, I contend that one can radicalize/maximize the concept of monumentality to include bodies engaged in specific visual, social practices along with the temporary/vernacular structures these bodies sometimes produce. And moreover, that in their “monumental” expressions, bodies can engage in a democratic, participatory, and difference-based production of “common” memory, dramatically contrasting traditional notions of collective memory propelled by the “old opposition between the private and the public” (*Multitude* 205).

The following analysis is therefore an attempt to ascend at least two plateaus: first, to expand and radicalize the discourses surrounding monumentality/ “public-ness” for rhetorical and philosophical purposes, and second, to re-deploy such newly invigorated discourses for ethico-political reasons concerning social and economic

justice. Communications theorist Grant David Bollmer suggests the need for these types of inter/ventions when he writes that:

[q]uite often memory serves as a category of individualistic experience
unable to articulate a collective politics or social struggle . . . except for
the ‘authenticity’ of representing the past and the production of revisionist
histories, the debate over the politics of memory is problematic. (451)

Thus, Bollmer suggests it is imperative to experiment with the possibilities that might open up when one develops or applies memory-oriented concepts apart from a concern for historical truth and the authenticity of perception-recollection. And although G. Mitchell Reyes justifiably warns that while doing so one should affirm “the *becoming* of memory” rather than “treat mnemonic practice as an object, transforming the action-oriented practices of remembrance into artifacts” (236), perhaps one can deconstruct the opposition at issue here by parsing out the “artifactual” or “monumental” effects that action-oriented practices produce, while explaining how every event of “becoming-monumental” exceeds its monumentality by virtue of its singularity or alterity.⁵⁸ Moreover, as I will show, this double-movement of monumentality and becoming comes to the fore when contrasting “public” and “common” memory, especially when

⁵⁸ As Hardt and Negri suggest, one effect of bodies “becoming-monumental” involves the “production of subjectivity through the common” (*Commonwealth* 300), or in my terms, the production of subjectivity through “common” memory, which entails that memory is productive of subjectivity rather than the converse.

highlighting how “common” memory is linked to action in the form of non-representational democratic practices striving to articulate radically divergent views.

ON BECOMING-MONUMENTAL (BECOMING-CENTAURIAN)

In this initial section, I argue one can maximize/radicalize the concept of monumentality to include bodies engaged in specific visual, social practices along with the vernacular/temporary structures they often produce. This contention is important not only because it lays the ground for thinking “common” memory, but entails metamorphosing the concept of monumentality by linking it to aesthetic performance broadly construed, inverting the traditional relationship between monuments and time (by relating them to futures), and reconceiving the destruction or removal of specific bodies/structures themselves. Furthermore, I contend that although certain bodies/structures performatively function as monuments, these figures are “exceeded” by the singularity or alterity of the body/structure itself. So although bodies/structures can undergo a “becoming-monumental,” emitting the effects of monuments, one cannot reduce them to their monumental (rhetorical-hermeneutic) expressions.

The first important contention to support here is how someone or something not made of stone, steel, or other “solid” materials (or not displayed upon a pedestal or in a space of visio-spatial prominence) can qualify as a monument. Do monuments not produce rhetorical effects through maintaining an appearance of permanence, power, and prestige? In contrast to this traditional conception of monumentality, philosopher Edward Casey remarks that although it seems “[shared] memory requires the density of stone to

mark and remark it,” monumental inscriptions do not require “tenacious media such as stone or brick” and therefore are “not dependent upon them” (18). This notion becomes clearer, for example, when one considers the effects of a performative “happening,” such as when artists position bodies in aesthetic configurations or build structures that only remain in place for mere hours, days, or weeks. Although they are far from permanent installments, these aesthetic forces have the power to produce striking and enduring memory. Along these same lines, Mitchell argues the activist practice(s) of demonstration and/or occupation “is itself an artistic practice” (23), one that constitutes a kind of “social sculpture” or “social architecture” (25). Mitchell’s contention is borne out whether one considers the memory produced by viewing the bodies of activists standing on street corners or in city parks, or whether one considers the temporary structures they often erect such as shanties and tents (or banners and aesthetic media). This idea becomes even more apparent when the bodies in question stand relatively still or when temporary living structures become an enduring part of cityscapes such that one passes by and views them on a daily basis for weeks or months. When this occurs, their visual rhetorical effects become comparable to the “official” statues or “permanent” structures that often flank them; their temporary nature does not diminish their memorable and “monumental” quality.

Significantly, if one re-conceptualizes certain bodies and temporary structures as emitting monumental effects, for instance, through connections with aesthetic performance or activist demonstrations and/or occupations, this entails an inversion of the traditional relationship between monuments and time. As Deleuze and Guattari point out,

“every work of art is a *monument*, but here the monument is not something commemorating a past, it is a bloc of present sensations that owe their preservation only to themselves and that provide the event with the compound that celebrates it” (166-167). In other words, not only do monumental bodies function as non-representational figures, they co-memorate events as they are taking place and demand attunement to the potential futures such events might contain.⁵⁹ Furthermore, this metamorphosis of the monument into something future-oriented is what leads Deleuze and Guattari to connect them to the non-representational aesthetic performance entailed in activist practice:

A monument does not commemorate or celebrate something that happened but confides to the ear of the future the persistent sensations that embody the event: the constantly renewed suffering of men and women, their re-created protestations, their constantly resumed struggle. (176-177)

For Deleuze and Guattari, monuments are directed toward potential futures rather than calcified pasts, and what christens such monuments as monuments is memorialization of currently unfolding events that have the capacity (like art) for producing new futures (or, as Deleuze and Guattari say, “new peoples” and “new earths”). Such monuments vocalize resistance and the struggle against exploitation and control.

⁵⁹ Observations regarding the commemoration of events as they are taking place support Casey’s argument that it is misguided to claim “the present is of no compelling interest in public memory. Often it is: the present in the making, the present that is *now*, is considered to be [of] central significance in the future” (18-19).

Anthropologist Michael Taussig makes a similar observation concerning the monumentalization of the “present”/future through bodies articulating struggles, and he does so by linking such memory-practices to the demonstrations/occupations of Occupy Movement activists. Taussig states he “was struck by the statuesque quality of many of the people holding up their handmade signs, like centaurs, half person, half sign . . . [a] stiller-than-still conjunction” (75). And he notes that “this centaurlike quality and stiller-than-still stillness—this terrible gravitas occurs because the sign holder is posing for photographers, or, rather, the sign is being made to pose for photographers” (76). In other words, through a “becoming-monumental,” emitting the rhetorical effects of a monument, activist bodies metamorphose themselves into objects of spectacle that draw the gaze of others, thereby producing memory in the “present.” Moreover, Taussig suggests this memory produced in the “present” is closely bound to history, when he writes that during the practice(s) of occupation and/or demonstration, “there is a fusion between the person and the sign that demands it being held aloft as testimony to history finding its articulation in words—words that play with words as much as with history” (76). As to what history rhetorically articulated in words might say, Judith Butler provides an insightful observation when, regarding the Occupy Movement, she writes that: “[t]he bodies assembled ‘say’ we are not disposable, whether or not they are using words at the moment. What they say, as it were, is that we are still here, persisting, demanding greater justice, a release from precarity, a possibility of a livable life” (12). Thus, through their monumental operations, performative aesthetic strategies such as demonstration and/or occupation, bodies can rhetorically compel on-lookers to remember

the “monument’s” existence and freedom, its value and “presence,” as well as its struggles and implicit desire to lessen the weight of that struggle so as to ascertain what Butler describes as “a livable life” (12).

Moreover, the above is a question concerning the reproduction of subjectivity, not only for the viewer but the performer as well. For instance, while a body poses for others during events of aesthetic performance, demonstration and/or occupation, and so on, the mere “look” of others (Sartre) leads the subject to respond differently, adopting, say, an attitude of increasing enthusiasm or seriousness. And when on-lookers respond to those engaged in the act of becoming-monumental, whether in supportive, derisive, or even comedic fashion, when such responses are assimilated by the monumental body, they are often incredibly persuasive with regard to its future responses.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ During protest events, it is intriguing to watch how activists behave depending upon how on-lookers respond to them. For instance, I have watched as activists exuberantly cheered in response to honking car horns, or boo/hiss in response to rude gestures by detractors. One can also see how a series of “positive” or “negative” responses can lead an activist to return to the picket-line energized or demotivated (or not to return!). Hence, each response is indirect evidence of a reproduction of subjectivity.



Fig. 1. An Occupy Activist “Becoming” Her Cardboard Sign.

However, it is important to emphasize that although bodies engaged in specific visible, social practices can function as monuments, producing rhetorical effects through a performative/aesthetic “stiller-than-still stillness,” one cannot un-problematically reduce a singular body to its hermeneutic-rhetorical expressions. For instance, it is reductive to take the rhetorical content of an activist’s cardboard sign as an essential indication of who they are—just as one cannot reduce a singularity’s existence to the form of a commodity. In rhetorical studies, the most perspicacious and exhaustive critique of reducing an existent to a hermeneutical figure or “monument” has come from Diane Davis, who reminds readers that though one can highlight the rhetorical power

inherent in the body “becoming-monumental” through performative practices, one must simultaneously “un-say” this gesture. In other words, although one must, as Adorno notes, become a thing to resist the thing-ification (objectification/commodification) of everything, one must exercise caution when doing so not to reduce the existence of singular beings to things. Davis does concede that “knowing depends on figuration” (40), that is, on the monumental structuration of perception-recollection, and she likewise points out that “all intelligibility, including self-intelligibility, is a tropological product” (40). However, she contends there is “an enigmatic surplus that overflows” the figure or monument which one cannot think as a singular being appears (55). This surplus of alterity or singularity “exceeds vision’s appropriative gaze” and “escapes all comprehension and all knowledge” (49); it is always-already “forgotten.” So although bodies can in certain cases operate as monuments, producing rhetorical effects through hermeneutic figuration, they simultaneously exceed said figuration, issuing a kind of “rhetorical” demand⁶¹ to not reduce them to that figure. The non-figurable, “forgotten” surplus of their being screams that who/what they are (becoming) and what they desire are irreducible to, for instance, a series of demands scrawled on cardboard signs.

Furthermore, one can highlight the monumentality of the structures these bodies erect, such as shanties/tents, artistic works, and so on. For as Mitchell suggests when theorizing the monumental quality of aesthetic/activist performance, “one might single

⁶¹ For more on the “rhetorical,” though non-hermeneutic, “demand” issued by the singular body (alterity) not to reduce it to a figure, see Davis’ *Inessential Solidarity*, especially Chapter Two on figuration (pages 37-65).

out the image of the tent and the encampment” as “manifestations of a long term resolve” (13-14), as iconic “images that promise to become monuments” (9). However, rather than rehearse the way in which temporary living structures operate as monuments due to their status as performance art or via rhetorical resonance with other monumental forms, I would like to look at how the *demolition* of certain temporary living structures and spaces for bodies reveals these structures or spaces as having a monumental quality. Robert Bevan’s discussion of the destruction of architecture during war time is instructive here, an event he argues is indicative of “cultural cleansing” (25-60). So although it is tenuous to equate the eviction of monumental bodies or the destruction of their living structures with the systematic cultural liquidation that occurs in times of war,⁶² Bevan’s observations nonetheless help one draw out the monumental quality of strategically-placed living structures such as tents/shanties, or certain ephemeral aesthetic forms. For instance, Bevan remarks that “[h]ousing . . . especially vernacular housing, can be monumental in the sense of acting as a stimulus to memories. . . . The term monument is used here in its broadest sense” (14). Viewing specific living structures as monuments also gives one a sense of how these dwellings can “[signal] to [their] enemies the presence of a community marked for erasure” (8). As monuments, temporary living structures take on a broader rhetorical significance—they function as markers of something that oppositional forces wish to erase from memory.

⁶² Regarding cultural cleansing, one might justifiably argue that war-based analogies are highly appropriate in the case of specific activist demonstrations/occupations; it is only that the war at issue is a *class war* rather than a militarist or imperial war between nation-states.

The “Poor People’s Campaign” (1968), for example, illustrates the ways in which viewing specific living structures or spaces as monuments can expose what is at stake in their violent demolition. The PPC was an occupation movement organized by Martin Luther King, Jr., and others, where upwards of 3,000 economic justice- and human rights-advocates built and camped out in a tent city on the Washington Mall for six weeks (Zinn 206).⁶³ Eventually, despite its nonviolent tactics, the PPC and its “Resurrection City” (zip code 20013) “was broken up by police action” via a thousand Washington, D.C., officers in riot gear firing tear gas canisters into the shantytown (206). Shortly thereafter, the encampment was demolished.

⁶³ Although the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., took place before the Poor People’s Campaign began, it succeeded in ruffling official feathers. The campaign triggered fears of rioting and 20,000 army soldiers were activated and prepared for a military occupation of the Capitol should the PPC pose a threat. Furthermore, the FBI monitored and attempted to disrupt the PPC through operation codename PODCAM, and some accused PPC participants of communism in an attempt to discredit their demands for socio-economic justice (“Poor” N.p.).



Fig. 2. Resurrection City with Washington Monument in Background.

Indeed, the vernacular housing of Resurrection City functioned as a rhetorical spur for producing memory, specifically a counter-memory of class and race struggle, which gave the city and its shanties a monumental function (Bevan 24). And when one views the shantytown in this light, it simultaneously transforms how one perceives-recalls its destruction. As Bevan points out, the “destruction of particular building types or architectural traditions,” especially monuments, imply “the erasure of the memories, history and identity attached to architecture and place – enforced forgetting – is the goal itself” (8). So if one views Resurrection City as a temporary monument to race and class struggle, one can understand its demolition as an instance of monumental destruction wherein the forgetting of this struggle was an implicit goal. Since the memory of such struggles is often a spur to collective action, it is no wonder why “[d]emolition has often been deployed to break up concentrations of resistance among the populace” (11).

Bevan also argues that demolitions have significant rhetorical force precisely because living structures seem stable and enduring: “[i]t is architecture’s very impression of fixity that makes its manipulation such a *persuasive tool*: selective retention and destruction can reconfigure historical record and the façade of fixed meanings brought to architecture can be shifted” (12-13 emphasis mine). Even temporary/vernacular living structures have the appearance of some degree of fixity, and this renders their “obliviation” all the more jarring. And because one can more easily erase temporary living structures, one can more easily modify the historical narratives surrounding them to suit the interests of those in power. This is why Bevan argues that “[p]rotecting the architectural heritage of those targeted for domination or elimination helps ensure that such peoples can never be erased entirely from history despite the determined efforts of their persecutors and destroyers” (24).

PUBLIC MEMORY: CONTROL, REPRESENTATION, HOMOGENEITY

Prevailing discourses on the topic define the type of memory produced by the dynamic monuments above as *public* memory. For instance, Casey states: “by saying ‘public’ we mean to contrast such memory with anything that takes place privately—that is to say, offstage, in the *idios cosmos* of one’s home or club, or indeed, just by oneself” (25). Thus, because temporary aesthetic performances and activist demonstrations/occupations do not typically take place in private space, by default this must mean—via disjunction—they are public. However, in contrast to this syllogistic logic, I argue that bodies engaged in specific visual, social practices along with the

structures they construct produce not *public* but what Hardt and Negri might call *common* memory.⁶⁴ The need for a third term beyond the private/public dichotomy is evidenced when one recognizes that scholars are forced to employ the concept of public memory to describe everything from troubling forms of “official” (hegemonic) state remembrance to the memory of “counter-publics” that resist official forms of remembrance through narrative counter-memory. To make this point, I will therefore focus here primarily on public memory’s “poisonous” aspects—in particular, its links to state -property and -control, the failure of democratic representation, and the elision of difference—but this is not to suggest that those who employ/have employed this term are somehow misguided or that public memory is a wholly corrupt concept. Rather, I perform this critique to highlight the need for an alternative conception, and to harvest the potentially fruitful results that may spring from it.

The first aspect of public memory I want to discuss regards its relationship to state-property/-control. I start here because it seems that without its often over-arching “ownership” or management by the state, public memory cannot legitimately claim to represent the memory of a populace, nor achieve its often homogenizing effects (whereby the plural memory of a Spinozistic multitude becomes the memory of “the nation” or “a people”). For instance, Hardt and Negri genealogically chart the history of “the public,”

⁶⁴ Regarding need for a conception of “the common,” Hardt and Negri point out that “[t]he standard view, . . . assumes that the only alternative to the private is the public, that is, what is managed and regulated by states and other governmental authorities, as if the common were irrelevant or extinct” (*Commonwealth* viii).

and reveal its connections to state-sovereignty, explaining that: “[t]he concepts of public goods and services were . . . developed in the light of a legal theory that considered the public as patrimony of the state and the principle of general interest as an attribute of sovereignty” (*Multitude* 206). Thus, public memory carries buried inside itself, like a worm-infested fruit, the implicit suppositions that the state is its guardian and that state-power over such memory is in the interest of populations. Moreover, Hardt and Negri repeatedly point out that the term “‘public’ too blurs an important distinction between state control and what is held and managed in common” (203). I focus more intently on this rhetorical slippage when discussing the concept of “the common” later on, but for now it is enough to note that one of its results is to blind subjects to the fact that though they believe they share control over public memory (because they conceive themselves as part of the public), power over said memory actually or primarily resides in state hands. Furthermore, when the power to produce and control memory is explicitly handed over to the state, since it is seemingly “an authority that transcends the social,” the public can “act in a bureaucratic way, often irrational, blind, and suffocating” (*Declaration* 25). This can manifest by preventing forms of remembrance (and forgetting) from being enacted, feverishly controlling those that are, or being ignorant of what multitudes actually remember,⁶⁵ in particular, those (“biopolitical”) struggles that the state wishes to preclude from entering public memory.

⁶⁵ Concerning ignorance regarding what populations actually remember, Vivian remarks that, quite often, “members of the state assume they are well informed concerning the past because they have been indoctrinated in official, exceedingly selective and distorted versions of it *ad infinitum*” (178). In other

Indeed, as Kendall Phillips notes, “publics have the capacity to authorize (or reject) certain memories” (5), and this can spell disaster for those that remember otherwise than *the* public. Phillips points out that “other publics” can contest state control over memory (6), but the question here is whether one best rhetorically articulates such conflicts as struggles between different publics, rather than between the public and “the common(ers)” —those who produce the common(s). This is an especially pertinent question given that such conflicts quite often exemplify what Bradford Vivian describes as the dark underbelly of *public forgetting*, or when the public “forgets” such that it “suppresses the individual or collective capacity to begin anew, [or] when it stifles one’s ability to fashion novel sociopolitical relations” (59).⁶⁶ That is, when the state enacts “forgetting” (as oblivation) so as to prevent socio-political transformation, reparation, and experimentation with new modes of existence. Moreover, as Mitchell chillingly adds, such conflicts highlight precisely why “public space is, in fact, *pre-occupied* by the state and the police, that its *pacified* and democratic character, apparently open to all, is sustained by the ever-present possibility of violent eviction” (10).

words, the specter of state control residing at the heart of public memory not only affects the multitude, but those in positions of state authority.

⁶⁶ It is important to note that although public forgetting is often a violent affair (such as in the case of Resurrection City’s demolition), as Vivian argues at length, forgetting also has an affirmative face. In this regard he explains how “[i]n the broadest terms, public forgetting is desirable when it reflects open and voluntary procedures of judgment and detestable when it contributes to denying opportunities for communal judgment as such” (177). Thus, in a later section I follow Vivian’s lead by developing an affirmative conception of “common” forgetting.

Along the above lines, consider the “Bonus Army” of 1932, an occupation movement for economic justice in the wake of World War I. During this event, angry veterans, unemployed and living in poverty, marched on Washington, D.C., to demand the government pay out bonus certificates that were due in the future. Eventually, more than twenty thousand veterans set up camp near the White House calling for recompense (Zinn 116). However, the march of the Bonus Army to Washington, its performative “monumental” occupation, and the counter-memorial challenge it signaled to official state narratives regarding the treatment of veterans and the memory of WWI, were not well-received by those in power. Hence, President Herbert Hoover ordered the army to evict them with cavalry, infantry, machine guns, tanks, tear gas, and fire; multiple victims perished and thousands were injured by tear gas (117).

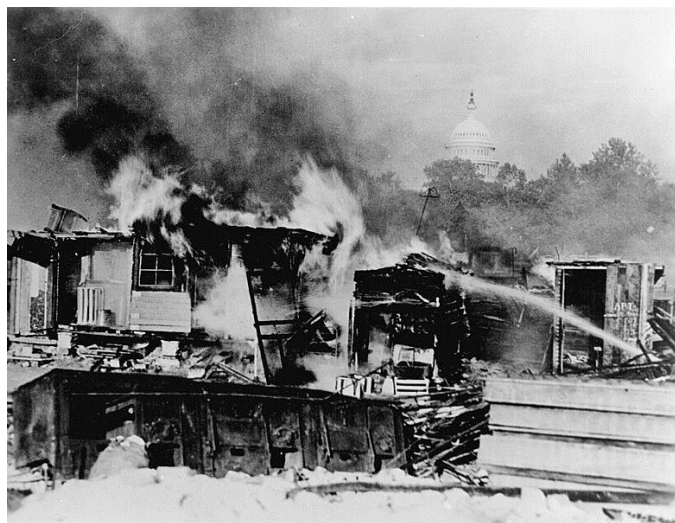


Fig. 3. The Bonus Army Encampment is Set Ablaze.

Indeed, the Bonus Army disrupted “official” public memory by occupying public property, producing a temporary monument to neglect of WWI veterans by the US government. And said government responded by demolishing this monument, exposing the problematic intervention of state power in both the production and eradication of “public” memory. For although the “Bonus”-veterans were once the enforcers of public memory as official state remembrance, they found themselves cast off when attempting to integrate their own memory of economic struggle—their counter-monument—into public narrative. Their dynamic monument to more economically just futures was anything but a welcome addition to public remembrance, highlighting the reasons why “public” space and “public” memory are not in fact “public,” and not open to those who critique official versions of the truth. *The public, in other words, is not so public after all.* And although some may wish to employ the term “counter-public” to describe the monumental performance of the Bonus Army, I submit that scholars have backed up against the limits of public sphere theory, both Habermasian and post-Habermasian.

Beyond control and the reinforcement of official narrative, the second unsettling feature of public memory—linking it to the activity of the state—is the notion that public monuments and related memorial-forms *represent* the memory of a citizenry. This is a problem because attempts at representation result in the homogenizing effacement or elision/exclusion of differences rather than successfully capturing the memory of a multitude. For example, Hardt and Negri observe that “public opinion . . . is in fact neither representative nor democratic” (*Multitude* 259), and this is troubling since the justification for building monuments is often that they are a response to such supposedly

shared opinions. Moreover, during the eighteenth century, when democratic representation developed as a concept/practice, the notion of “the public” was also transformed into an existing entity for which a representative might stand in—which is also why it is believed today that “the public” can have monuments that represent its memory (259). However, Hardt and Negri argue that the concept of the/a representable public is a chimera: “[w]hen polls and surveys lead us to think of the public as an abstract subject—the public thinks or wants *x* or *y*—that is pure fiction and mystification” (263). Yet it is this prevailing mystification that undergirds the idea one can represent a citizenry’s memory in a monument or other forms of public memory.

The third troubling effect of public memory regards the effacement of difference, or the idea that when attempts at representing a multitude’s memory occur, this involves an effacement of different rememberers’ experiences in order to offer an image of coherence; that is, the image of a public possessing a unified/homogenous memory. For instance, as Reyes points out, there is a wide-spread “propensity of official public memory to depoliticize the past so as to present a coherent narrative of U.S. history” (228), and much scholarship on public memory exhibits the same characteristic (230).⁶⁷ Furthermore, public memory often strives to maintain its authoritativeness through the illusion of fixity, as though it can remain self-same throughout history. This is why Vivian avers that “[p]ublic memories retain rhetorical influence by appearing essentially

⁶⁷ In-line with Reyes’ observations on coherence, Vivian argues that “[i]n our society of the spectacle, public events . . . increasingly are organized to unite an otherwise fractured citizenry in a dynamic affective experience” (81).

unchanged, and thus authentic, from their origins to their present incarnation” (130). So not only does public memory often cover over differences between rememberers spatially, for instance, across various populations, but also temporally, and it does so via the illusions of coherence and authenticity (in order to retain its power and influence).

As for some concrete examples of public memory/monuments that profess to represent a unified populace and thereby result in homogenizing memory across both space and time, one can turn to the Washington Monument and the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. With regard to the Washington Monument, one finds “the public” literally depicted as a (mono)lith, which is why Mitchell contends that it exemplifies “the most reductive and abstract form of the public literally manifested as both sculpture and architecture” (25). And moreover, because the monument attempts to conceptually unify the US populace into a single, coherent image, its rhetorical operation involves “the incorporation of [all US] citizens into a totality” (25). Moreover, public monuments not only can work to “level out” the differences inherent among collections of rememberers, but also regularize the way that multitudes recall specific events. For example, Barbara Biesecker critically describes the WWII Memorial as a “homogenizing force” that responds “to the contemporary crisis of national identity,” and it possesses this force by fabricating a shared memory of the war as central to US history, attempting to generate veneration toward the war and those who fought in it (I would likewise add that it produces a nationalism useful for generating support for future wars). Biesecker also argues that the memorial “rearticulate[s] the relation of the citizen to the nation,” by fabricating a fictional ideal of US citizens unified by their memory of WWII so as to

“resuscitate a waning sense of the ‘People’” (215-216). Thus, the Washington Monument and WWII Memorial function as instances of public memory meant to represent a “People’s” memory, but in doing so instead *fabricate that memory*,⁶⁸ as they elide the radically divergent views and attitudes citizens actually hold. Furthermore, as *public* monuments, they likewise produce the illusion of a consenting public that participated in their conception and design. However, in contrast to such effacements of difference among multitudes of rememberers in the form of public monuments, one can take inspiration from Biesecker’s comment that “it is possible to remember otherwise, . . . not only what we remember but how we remember it could be different, and . . . collective memory could be pressed into the service of a very different politics” (239).

Pressing memory into the service of a very different politics is precisely what I strive for with the concept of “common” memory, and as a transition to begin developing this concept, I want to analyze Mitchell’s observation that “[t]he scores of [empty] plazas, squares, and open urban spaces around the world, from Tahrir Square to Zuccotti Park, are themselves the appropriate monuments to the Occupy movement” (18). Mitchell’s observation indicates a challenge to the public memory tradition grounded on the ideals of representation and coherence—thereby gesturing toward a conception of memory that preserves radical difference.

⁶⁸ Regarding the fabrication by monuments of a supposedly unified memory, one may find instructive Deleuze and Guattari’s comment in *What is Philosophy* that: “[t]he monument’s action is not memory but fabulation” (167-168).



Fig. 4. Zuccotti Park After the Eviction of Occupy.

Indeed, Mitchell claims the empty spaces once occupied by social movements such as Occupy, the Poor People's Campaign, and the Bonus Army are "sign[s] of potentiality, possibility, and plenitude, a democracy not yet realized" (21), and I would add that empty space is an appropriate monument to various social movements because it makes no pretense to represent those who mobilized to produce those movements. Any such attempts at representation would ultimately fail to rhetorically encapsulate the radical plurality of differences in bodies, political philosophies, subject-positions, and so on, that characterize not only Occupy, but numerous movements throughout the world and world history. Thus, when police surround a park or other once-occupied space such as in the image above, they not only paradoxically guard a monument to, for instance, economic struggle and social justice, they serve to produce its "frame" so that one can see more

clearly the outlines of a monument to that which is un-representable. This is to suggest, moreover, that such places/spaces are not empty at all, but “haunted, populated by spirits that refuse to rest” as well as the trace of “ghostly memory” that one cannot rhetorically confine to the statist figures of governed, representable, and homogenous, that is, *public*, memory (Mitchell 18, 21).

COMMON MEMORY: DEMOCRACY, PARTICIPATION, DIFFERENCE

Likely the most prudent place to begin here is by unpacking the somewhat misleading concept of “the common” so that one can fruitfully apply it to rhetorical/memory studies, with special attention on explaining why the “common” of common memory does not entail a sameness of memory. In *Commonwealth*, Hardt and Negri write that they “consider the common . . . those results of social production that are necessary for social interaction and further production, such as knowledges, languages, codes, information, affects, and so forth” (viii), along with the wealth of the material world. Because Hardt and Negri describe the common as the result of production within social interactions, I argue that one can understand “common” memory practices as the result of social production and interaction as well, especially because memory involves an assemblage of knowledges, codes, and so on that promote *future* production. Moreover, just as the wealth of society produced “in common” by the multitude is subordinated to private ownership and public control, there is likewise a veritable “treasure-house” of “common” memory that society produces, but that is domesticated in the form of public monuments, for example, or is understood to have origins in the

experiences of “individual”⁶⁹ subjects. So whereas as Hardt and Negri propose productive practices and forms of social interaction that resist appropriation of the commonly-produced wealth, I wish to pursue memory practices that resist appropriation of the “common” memory—a memory whose truths are “constructed from below” through democratic participation (121), and that one cannot non-reductively attempt to represent or cover over differences circulating within it.

Democratic participation is the first key characteristic of “common” memory. So, just as Hardt and Negri’s concept of the common envisions a multitude producing wealth without recourse to private ownership or public control, I contend that “common” memory entails a multitude of singularities collaboratively engaging in memory practices without intervention by the state or claims to ownership/genesis by “individuals.” Multiple examples of this type of memory-production have already been introduced with regard to monumental/singular bodies and the living structures they construct, so with these examples in mind, one can more easily understand what “common(er)” memory practices look like that “militate *against* . . . public power in the interests of the common and mechanisms of self-management” (*Declaration* 26). Indeed, within specific social movements, for example, one witnesses the co-production of temporary/performative monuments that refuse public control or claims to private ownership, and therefore one

⁶⁹ Resonating with my critique of the “individual” as an atomized, self-sufficient being in previous chapters, Hardt and Negri write: “[a]n individual can never produce the common, no more than an individual can generate a new idea without relying on the foundation of common ideas and intellectual communication with others” (*Commonwealth* 303).

can see how “common” memory practices are “based on the *communication* among singularities and emerge through the collaborative social processes of production” (*Multitude* 204). Rather than being managed by “individual” subjects or constructed by state apparatuses for the “public good,” “common” memory is “managed democratically by the multitude” (206), and entails the production of subjectivities that recognize their inter-relationality with (and dependency upon) others.

The second feature of “common” memory is resistance to representation, and this Bartlebian “No” not only calls for the democratic participation outlined above, but the existence of specific “common places” wherein non-representational participation can take place. As Hardt and Negri note, the refusal of representation is so important because “representation is not, in fact, a vehicle of democracy but instead an obstacle to its realization” (*Declaration* 9). For although historically, representative governance indicated an improvement over the tyranny of monarchical sovereignty, today representation primarily blocks the voices of the multitude from being heard and its polyvalent desires from being attended and actualized. Due to this break-down or failure of representation, those desiring to articulate the “common” memory of the citizenry or multitude have no other option but to speak for themselves, which is why, for example, Butler writes that: “[i]n demonstrating, in acting, the people come to represent themselves, embodying and reanimating the principles of equality that have been decimated” (“Demands” 11). And significantly, when one represents oneself, one is not actually *representing* anyone at all, just as in Hardt and Negri’s “commonwealth,” there

is a “common” ownership of wealth and therefore no ownership of private property at all (regarding the means of production, communication, and exchange).

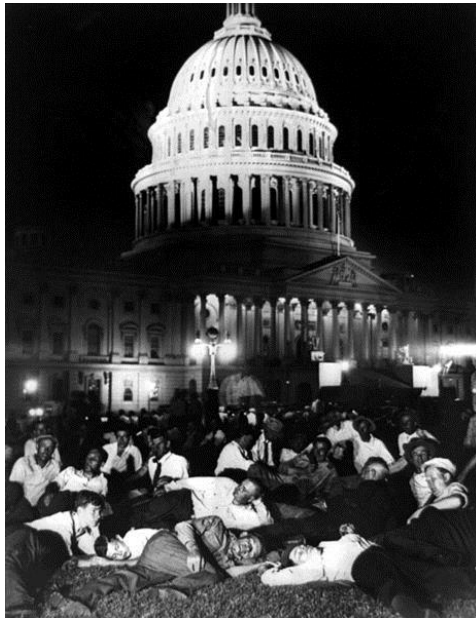


Fig. 5. The Bonus Army “Represents Itself” in Washington, D.C.

But if it is the case that “the events which comprise [collective memory] resist representation,” as Michael Bernard-Donals puts it (174), what does memory do if not represent the voices or desires of multitudes? Here the ghost of Bergson whispers that the answer resides in *action*. That is, in “common” memory, memory is en-acted through the performances of singularities rather than supposedly static/representational structures. This distinction is affirmed by both Reyes and Bollmer, such as when Reyes notes that “[t]he language of representation, which makes sense within an intersubjective

framework, does not attend to the nonrepresentational, performative modalities of memory as a medium” (237). So when artists, activists, and others engage in performances with monumental force, these performances do not operate representationally, but rather, indicate memory as produced through action, and as becoming action. And as Bollmer explains, “it is through memory as action that both individuals and collectives come into being as entities capable of political and social struggle” (452)—when memory becomes capable of producing a resistant subject, a “biopolitical” subject capable of transforming the world through relations with others.

However, if “common” memory resists representation by metamorphosing memory into action, there must be a place/space wherein said action can manifest. In discourses on public memory, such places are *public* places, such as when Casey explains how “[p]ublic discussion always takes place in quite specific locations: the agora, the forum, and (still at times) Hyde Park. All three of these are established places for promoting speech in common . . . But such common places also spring up spontaneously” (33). Notice though, the rhetorical slippage as if the public and common or “common places” are equivalent or interchangeable,⁷⁰ a slippage that may lead projects attempting to articulate a “common” memory to find themselves, as Hardt and Negri put it, “back under the control of the state” (*Declaration* 26). Thus, it appears there is need for a conception of places/spaces, zones or territories that, in a significant sense, break with the public and public memory altogether. Classical rhetorics provide one with such a concept

⁷⁰ A similar rhetorical slippage occurs when Casey writes that “[place] is integral to public memory, which is not merely situated in a public arena or literal ‘common place’ but *enacted* there” (32).

in the form of “common places” (*topoi koinoi*), which indicate finding-places for arguments or memory,⁷¹ and today they often take the shape of physical territories “opened up” or “re-territorialized” through the performative activities of bodies engaged in aesthetic and political practice. Moreover, even when such performative practices “happen” in places/spaces deemed private or public, a “common place” is ripped open (cleared) in their midst, disrupting/de-territorializing the space’s typical, often-hegemonic, operations.⁷²

Paulo Virno indirectly aids one in conceiving such “common places” when he writes that “the *topoi koinoi* are the most generally valid logical and linguistic forms of all our discourse (let us even say the skeletal structure of it); they allow for the existence of every individual expression because no one can do without them” (34-35).

Casuistically stretching this Aristotelian idea of a general form supposedly underlying all argument and singular expression, one might contend that “common places” (as re-

⁷¹ In *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, George A. Kennedy outlines the concept of the *topos* or *topoi koinoi* as follows:

Topos in Greek means ‘place,’ and a logical or rhetorical ‘topic’ is thus a finding-place for an argument. Aristotle may have borrowed the concept of a topic from the ‘place’ in a hand-book where examples of argument from probability or other rhetorical techniques were to be found, or the meaning may be derived from the mnemonic system in which images of words or ideas to be remembered were imagined against a background of places. (95-96)

⁷² Along these lines, consider Hakim Bey’s concept of the “Temporary Autonomous Zone” (TAZ), where autonomy indicates an operation free from private and public control.

territorialized territories) are likewise bases for expression, and no one can do without them if one wants one's voice heard and memory articulated (without being muffled by the representative mechanisms of the state). And when such places/spaces open up, because they resist public management and statist intervention, Virno describes them as constituting "a non-public public sphere, . . . a *non-governmental* public sphere, far from the myths and rituals of sovereignty" (40). This aporetic concept of a "non-public public sphere" is precisely what the concept of the "common place" where "common memory" is produced strives to indicate.

The last feature of "common" memory I want to discuss is the preservation of difference, which stands opposed to the tendency of public memory to homogenize the memory of multitudes via monumental forms of representation. For when bodies engage in aesthetic, socio-political practices/performances not "bottlenecked" through forms of representation, and must democratically participate in producing "monuments," the singularity of those bodies is more thoroughly articulated. This explains why Hardt and Negri contend that "the common has nothing to do with sameness. Instead, in struggle, different social groups interact as singularities and are enlightened, inspired, and transformed by their exchange with each other" (*Multitude* 37). Thus, Hardt and Negri turn the standard definition of "common-ness" on its head through a return to the term's conception in political economy, sharply contrasting its use as indicating the presence of some essential feature (identity). This is why they in turn argue that "[w]hereas the individual dissolves in the unity of the community, singularities are not diminished but express themselves freely *in the common*" (*Commonwealth* 204, emphasis mine). Indeed,

when singularities/monumental bodies open up “common” places, spaces, territories, or zones managed neither by the state nor controlled privately, therein they can express radical differences, including differences in memory or whatever (for instance, different subject-positions with regard to class, race, gender, sexuality, species, and so on). So common memory does not relate to sameness, but to producing/articulating memory within a “common” territory (a “commons”) wherein singularities can resist being “leveled out.”⁷³ And yet, when these radically different singularities with multiplicitous memory assemble, they possess the power, for instance, to produce social movements and political transformations, and therefore provide a powerful example of what Bollmer means when he says “there should also be a theory of how memory creates collective political bodies produced in specific relations of power, rather than the suggestion that certain groups of people remember the past in similar ways” (451). Likewise, through the

⁷³ One reason why “common” memory does not entail a memory an entire community holds in common is because this notion of a universally-shared memory is a chimera. As to why, consider Ludwig Wittgenstein’s famous argument in *Philosophical Investigations* regarding “family resemblances,” where he explains how just because a collection of entities is called by the same name does not mean that it has any one essential feature:

Consider for example the proceedings that we call ‘games’. I mean board-games, chess-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all?—Don’t say: There *must* be something common, or they would not be called ‘games’—but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all.—For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. (31)

preservation of difference, “common” memory introduces into rhetorical/memory studies a regard for memory-differences *within* seemingly unified collectives, and this is important because as Reyes notes:

Scholars consistently acknowledge the differences between identities, differences that produce identity politics, but difference and alterity do not appear to play a role *within* identity formations. Instead, collective identities depend on what individuals hold in common, and often what they hold in common is provided through the semiotics of remembrance.

(233)

In other words, in rhetorical/memory studies, “common-ness” is typically linked to similitude rather than the expression of difference within “common” places/spaces. Hence it is pertinent to demonstrate how difference as singularity/alterity is always-already at work *within* memory collectives, and one can do so by exposing how, through the production of “common” places/spaces, radical differences in memory are more thoroughly preserved.

One can find evidence of such preservation of difference, for example, in the contemporary Occupy Movement, where by refusing to make a series of demands that apply to the movement as a “whole,” and by allowing any participant in the movement to speak at General Assembly meetings or in the press, the singular desires, struggles, and memories of activists are able to achieve rhetorical expression free from the “leveling out” of difference (at least in principle).



Fig. 6. Occupy Wall Street General Assembly in Washington Park.

Indeed, because participants in Occupy have such diverse backgrounds and subject-positions, no one memory unifies them—there is nothing common to all.⁷⁴ And yet, each of these singularities can participate in the movement, producing “common” places/spaces regardless of background, and without the “authenticity” of their motivating experiences/memory being called into question (at least in principle). For whether one is LGBT, disabled, of-color, destitute, or even wealthy, if one earnestly participates in the movement, expressing a desire for economic fairness and social justice, one has the power to open a re-territorialized territory with others wherein radical differences in memory are expressed with little fear of rejection. Thus, it is apparent that

⁷⁴ Although it is tempting to claim that a memory of economic struggle unifies participants in Occupy, there are in fact many wealthy subjects who express solidarity with the movement’s desires for economic equality and social justice. For numerous examples, see: westandwiththe99percent.tumblr.com.

“common” memory indicates not similitude of recollected experience, but rather, a multiplicity of memory articulated within a “commons” by the “commoners” who produce it. And this articulation of memory by so many different singularities possesses a significant rhetorical force with regard to the production of subjectivity; for one cannot dwell in proximity to so many different subjects without becoming radically metamorphosed as a subject oneself.

COMMON FORGETTING: OBLIVION AND AFFIRMATION

Before coming to any provisional conclusions about “common” memory—a radically differentiated memory democratically produced in a commons by those who resist representation and affirm a plurality of voices—it is necessary to take up the question of *forgetting*. For just as public memory has its counterpart in public forgetting, so does “common” memory. I say “counterpart” here because rather than being memory’s opposite, as Bernard-Donals explains:

memory and forgetfulness are not opposites but counterparts in the historical, and by consequence the narrative, project: forgetfulness is not the absence of, but rather an integral element of memory; and all memory is shot through with moments of forgetfulness. (41)

This is an important point because throughout histories of western rhetorics and philosophy, to quote Vivian, “[f]orgetting has a bad reputation,” and it has this reputation due to “the language that ancients and moderns alike [have] used to describe it” (168). Indeed, rather than granting forgetting a conceptual existence of its own, it is typically

figured as parasitic upon memory,⁷⁵ as nothing more than memory's derivative, rather than a force in its own right and as productive of memory. Thus, following the lead of Bernard-Donals and Vivian, I want to develop a concept of "common" forgetting, which will (in part) require abiding by a "a definition of forgetting categorically distinct from far more familiar scenes of historical decay or genocidal destruction" (7). That is, I aim to develop a primarily *affirmative* conception of forgetting in connection with "the common," and in doing so, show how "arguments to communally forget [can] produce socially, politically, and ethically attractive outcomes" (10). However, before developing this affirmative conception, I want to rigorously hesitate and examine "common" forgetting as it has the capacity to manifest unsettlingly.

Indeed, although forgetting is potentially an affirmative force, I do not want to give the naïve impression that when it is connected with "the common," it is automatically worth celebrating. Certainly, just as public forgetting has its dark side as outlined for instance in the evictions/demolitions of the Bonus Army, Poor People's Campaign, and Occupy Movement, "common" forgetting has its own problems as well. So although Nietzsche's in/famous observation stands that "*the unhistorical and the historical are necessary in equal measure for the health of an individual, of a people and of a culture*" (63 emphasis his), sometimes "[i]n its most pernicious forms, forgetting resumes its timeworn place among the forces of violence and repression" (Vivian 60).

⁷⁵ With regard to forgetting's rhetorical figuration as a parasite, Vivian explains how, traditionally, "[f]orgetting is memory's unshakable other, a ghostly counterpart shadowing luminous representations of former experiences" (3). Thus, it is often connected with amnesia, oblivion, and lack.

And such violence can include conceptual or rhetorical violence as well as physical varieties.

As an example of “forgetting” as exemplifying rhetorical or conceptual violence, consider certain Tea Party demonstrations wherein activists made comparisons between the Affordable Health Care Act (aka “Obamacare”) and the horrors of the Holocaust. For although one might balk at considering the Tea Party as exemplifying “common” memory and/or forgetting, due to its relatively homogenous constitution and *ethos* of radical individualism, the movement/party nevertheless strives to performatively “monumentalize” its message through democratic participation and non-representational means. And provided its refusal (at least initially) to organize and articulate a memory of economic struggle without representation or public control, and because its voices were not (at least initially) homogenized by its leaders, it does bear some key markers of “common” memory. Thus, regarding “common” forgetting and its capacity to manifest problematically, consider the following image from a Tea Party rally:



Fig. 7. Tea Party Protesters “Become-Monumental.”

Here one finds an image of President Barack Obama depicted in whiteface (inspired by the maniacal Joker from recent Batman films), and the Affordable Care Act described as analogous to “The Final Solution” enacted by the Hitlerian regime during World War II, a genocidal campaign many consider the most abominable undertaking in recent world history. However, even when considered a gift to corporate America, one cannot equate mandating the US citizenry to purchase health insurance from private companies with the “horrific extermination of 6 million Jews and millions of non-Jews” (Zinn 147), unless one engages in an audacious “forgetting” of world history. Yet, this rather reckless “forgetting” is seemingly an instance of “common” forgetting, as it is performed through a “becoming-monumental” of singularities that democratically organize, refuse representation, and so on. Clearly, then, “common” forgetting is not always an event

worth affirming, but the conception aimed for in what follows breaks with traditions of forgetting that amount to historical amnesia or obliviousness.

In the tradition of forgetting inaugurated by Nietzsche and exemplified by Vivian and others, it is “presuppose[d] that acts of willful forgetting can be acts of justice” (Vivian 53)—which suggests one cannot express an amnesiac comportment toward the past. Rather, one recognizes and affirms the past as it took place, but engages in rhetorical re-descriptions and re-imaginings that strive to diminish the damaging effects of that past on the “present”/future. Or as Vivian puts it, in such cases, “[f]orgetting achieves persuasive effect as a rhetorical form—that is, as a speech or language act intended to influence thought, debate, or action in public affairs—not by asking audiences to become literally oblivious about segments of their shared past” (47). Thus, rather than erasing the past, forgetting *justly* demands one reconfigure it such that it takes on a new significance, and when this happens civic discussion and action are often modified for the better. This is why Vivian contends that the goal of forgetting “is not amnesia but counter-memory as Michel Foucault describes it” (50), that is, an ethical “forgetting” that clears the way for remembering differently/affirmatively. And recall, as argued in previous chapters, counter-memory entails a reproduction of subjectivity, more specifically, the production of subjects that perceive-recall life in ways resistant to official narratives and calcified truths.

In order to connect an affirmative conception of forgetting to “the common,” however, some examples are necessary. Vivian provides one such example through his analysis of Gypsy culture, despite the fact he frames this discussion as exemplifying

“public” rather than “common” forgetting. Vivian argues that forgetting “constitutes one of the primary formative principles of Gypsy heritage in general” (115), and to these formative “principles” one can add a distrust of statist interaction/intervention linked to Gypsy persecution, as well as the ceaseless production of “common” places for dwelling, building, and interacting, all wherein political representation is unnecessary. Moreover, Vivian points out that “Gypsies lack a common sense of identity, and thus of culture and memory,” and therefore, “[t]he meaning of being Gypsy resists signification” (119-120). In other words, there is no “common” Gypsy memory as similitude of recollection. This does not mean that Gypsies have “no sense at all of a defining identity, culture, or memory” (119), but it does mean there is no essence or essential memory bound to Gypsy-hood. Yet, this openness to difference in memory, one produced through an “eternal” return of forgetting as cultural practice, is precisely what “common” places/spaces open the potential for actualizing. Hence, due to cultural distrust of public intervention and representation, as well as an attunement to difference produced through forgetting, I submit that one can view Gypsy culture as exemplifying “common” rather than public forgetting.

Finally, I want to discuss a case that exemplifies “common” forgetting in relation to counter-memory as Vivian describes it. On November 9th, 1969, so as to draw attention to the socio-political grievances of Native Americans, seventy-eight members of different tribes proceeded to performatively occupy Alcatraz Island (Zinn 286). Indeed, by “Hold[ing] the Rock” along with the more than six hundred Indians from more than fifty tribes that would eventually join them (286), they attempted to draw attention to the

plight of Native American reservation life, and the systematic erasure from memory of atrocities, land-thefts, and economic injustices perpetuated against Native Americans throughout the formation of the US (and into the present). Although the US government eventually cut off telephone lines, electricity, and water to Alcatraz, many Native Americans stayed, but as Zinn notes, “[s]ix months later, federal forces invaded the island and physically removed the Indians living there” (287).



Fig. 8. Native Americans Occupy Alcatraz Island.

Regardless of their eviction, the Indian tribes opened up a “common place” in the middle of Alcatraz Island where they became body-monuments to economic and racial struggle. They democratically organized themselves in opposition to private control and public representation, encouraged audiences to hear the voices of multiple tribes, and

disseminated a counter-memorial narrative regarding the treatment of Indian populations. In doing so, they affirmatively shed or “forgot” those white-washed US histories that occluded genocide and economic deprivation, and exemplified what a “common” forgetting can do; that is, a “forgetting” and counter-remembering that often can only take place when a commons is opened up so that singular voices are heard. And it is through such events of affirmative forgetting and counter-remembering that, Vivian notes, performatively enact “the very deed upon which all of politics depends: the act of beginning again” (88)—encouraging hope in new and better futures.

CONCLUSION: LETTING BE THE STILL

As this investigation into the monumental quality of specific (singular) bodies/structures and the “common” memory they produce comes to close, the question that likely arises is what the inquiry directs one toward as a next step. For as Bollmer explains, “[c]ollective memory is the conjunction of a human with the technological, and perhaps other humans, in order to *do* something” (461). Perhaps this “doing” resides just as much in *thinking* as it does in *acting*, and in the critical attitudes and rhetorical articulations one develops regarding various events, figures, and practices. For instance, if one bears witness to the “becoming-monumental” of a body as it exposes itself to scrutiny, regardless of what it “says,” is not this precarious monument worth respecting in its fantastic vulnerability even if only by contemplating what it strives to express? Moreover, as Bevan points out, “[t]he continuing fragility of civilized society and decency is echoed in the fragility of its monuments” (8), and is not the exposed body

offering itself up to the penetrating gaze of others the most fragile monument of all, the one most worth protecting? Given its tenuousness and fragility, is it not the one most worthy of consideration in thought?

Likewise, just as the bodies of those who offer themselves up to scrutiny, who expose themselves through a “becoming-monumental,” exhibit a fragility calling one to carefully attend them, is not “the common(s),” the place/space wherein one can articulate a radical diversity of memory, utterly fragile and precarious as well—especially because it often opposes itself to private and public, corporate/statist powers, and has no one to speak for (or remember) it beyond itself? Thus, when the “commoner” appears and produces a “common place,” daring to articulate an often-anguished memory of, for instance, economic, racial, gendered, or other forms of struggle, when s/he dares to recall that memory and persists in “common space” with others so that they might recall their struggles or desires for the future as well, is there not a call to protect such sites of articulation? And when such sites have been “erased,” do they not leave behind the trace of ghostly memory, “specters of the common” (Commonwealth 153) calling/obligating one to protect them in the future? Perhaps if one answers in the affirmative, this signals the coming of the commoner as well. For in the promise of protection and speaking out, or even adopting a contemplative attitude of “letting be,” one thereby begins to re-produce “the common” once more, drawing it from the nameless ashes, and begins to rebuild the “treasure-house” whereby one’s memory can take its place alongside others—*joining them in the fold.*

Beginning(s): Memories of the Future

Memory projects itself toward the future, and it constitutes the presence of the present.

-- Jacques Derrida, *Memoires for Paul de Man*

What's at stake in breaking out/in . . . is not an/other landing site. . . . What's at stake . . . is nothing short of the future.

-- Diane Davis, *Breaking up [at] Totality: A Rhetoric of Laughter*

Typically, it is academic custom to bookend a text by signaling various conclusions along with providing a summary of what the text has covered. However, given the respective topics of this investigation, the rhetorics of memory/forgetting and the Occupy Movement, such an approach will not suffice. For this is not a text that aims at conclusions, but rather, for holding questions open and inviting further thought, for resisting “foreclosure” in the sense of “having done” with something. This is especially important given that the role of memory in rhetorical studies is only now being revisited after centuries of neglect, and the Occupy Movement has perhaps only just now passed through its first major cycle. Thus, attempting to reach conclusions about these events and their relation to one another would entail restricting their vast possibilities at precisely the kairotic moment when they might blossom. Rather than conclusions, therefore, here I will instead point to the *beginnings* of rhetorical memory/forgetting and

the Occupy Movement, and call for others to join in the conversation regarding those beginnings. This involves challenging the notion that memory is primarily directed toward the past by emphasizing instead its vital relationships to the future and *hope*. And in order to invigorate such hope, I offer suggestions as to how social movements can aid one in understanding memory's (/forgetting's) "futural" attunement.



Fig. 1. Hula Hooping Activist at Occupy Austin.

To begin (again), recall Collin Gifford Brooke's remark that "memory and delivery stand as nearly vestigial canons, little more than reminders of rhetoric in a different place and time" (29). Of course, as evidenced throughout this text, I would have it otherwise, and so I have developed multiform ways by which one might overcome the

seemingly “vestigial” nature of rhetorical memory, fostering for it a new growth and new functionality, particularly by putting it into practice and by developing it as a critical *strategy* for analyzing events. However, rather than recount and reminisce about the particular ways in which I have attempted to “practice” memory, for instance, in relation to the production of subjectivity, student writing, monumentality and “common” places, and technological archives, I prefer to ask readers: What other ways are possible? Or more importantly, how might one prepare the ground to actualize those unforeseeable “virtualities” that the future of memory secretly holds in store, that Jacques Derrida has described as always *to come*?⁷⁶ Furthermore, what does the role of memory in rhetorical studies have the capacity to *be-come*? For as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari proclaim, “[w]herever we used the word ‘memories’ . . . we were wrong to do so; we meant to say ‘becoming,’ we were saying becoming” (*Thousand* 294). So in the spirit of their observation, what “becoming(s)” of memory are still on the way? How will memory make itself heard *from the future*?

The call to promote strategies for bringing forth memory’s unforeseen “virtualities” and “becoming(s)” holds for forgetting as well as memory, as they are inexorably bound, yet irreducible, forces. Thus the question becomes: How might those

⁷⁶ Alex Reid describes the virtual as “a realm of potentials that are not actualized,” and where “[t]hose potentials exist as an irretrievable past, what we did not come to think, but from which our thoughts emerged, like bubbles surfacing on water coming to a boil” (*Virtuals* 105). Thus, a profound relationship exists between the virtual and that which has been so thoroughly “forgotten” that it has never entered memory/thought.

in rhetorical studies come to agree with Nietzsche when he proclaims that “it is altogether impossible to *live* at all without forgetting” (*Untimely* 62)? Or to restate the question with a twist: How might rhetoricians place forgetting in the service of life, putting it into practice alongside memory? This is such a critical idea because as Diane Davis notes, forgetting amounts to “a life-affirming *shedding* in anticipation of a new future,” and if one is “to think the unthinkable” by enacting the revaluation of values that new futures require, quite often it *will have been* necessary to let memory go (*Breaking* 277-278). That is, the future itself and the new values that produce/constitute it are opened up only through a jettisoning of burdensome past foundations. For indeed, what are social movements like Occupy calling for if not an affirmative “letting go” of certain problematic values, in Occupy’s particular case, the neo-liberal capitalist values connected to an *ethos* of “accumulate wealth, forgetting all but self?”

The question of forgetting is therefore so vital because it aids one in clearing the way for new values and radically new socio-political paradigms, or as Bradford Vivian puts it, “[f]orgetting eventuates the . . . production of revolutionary futures”⁷⁷ (“Deletion”

⁷⁷ Regarding forgetting and prospects for socio-political change, Vivian notes how “the future revolutionary rejection of the political, social, and economic past unavoidably calls on those who would effect that rejection to heed the calls of the revolutionary dead, of those who were sacrificed so that the rupturing future might arrive” (“Deletion” 6). Thus, whenever one engages in a politically productive (rhetorically performative) act of affirmative forgetting, one simultaneously engages in an act of mourning and remembrance, calling forth the specters of the dead who fought so that a kairotic forgetting/rupture is possible.

5). Vivian likewise argues that forgetting is “the very deed upon which all of politics depends: the act of beginning again” (*Public* 88). And what he means here, beyond warning readers about the dangers involved in trying to inflexibly preserve a particular socio-cultural memory, is that if one moralistically clings to dangerous and outmoded forms of thought—either by recalling them incessantly, or treating them as having a divine, transcendent origin or foundation in an inexorable Human Nature—then there is no opportunity for starting over or beginning again. Without forgetting, one is condemned to a stultifying repetition of the same.

Of course, refusing the inflexibility of memory, the repetition of the same, politically, socially, economically, and so on, is the very substance of class-oriented movements like Occupy, and other social movements regarding women’s rights, civil rights, GLBT rights, and many more. For at their hearts is an attempt to remember otherwise and to envision new futures. And yet, the orientation of movements toward the future, their strategic deployment of memory in the service of the future, is what makes them so difficult to predict and grapple with as events unfold—as one’s expectations are constantly thwarted, one is incessantly baffled and surprised, shocked and overjoyed. This is what makes thinking and writing about social movements incredibly challenging, but this difficulty is precisely what thinking and writing are about—struggling with the un-thought, the im-memorial, in short, *the future*, and so I am comforted by Gilles Deleuze’s remark:

How else can one write but of those things which one doesn’t know, or knows badly? It is precisely there that we imagine having something to

say. We write only at the frontiers of our knowledge, at the border which separates our knowledge from our ignorance and transforms one into the other. (*Difference* xxi)

In other words, when one truly engages in *thinking* or *writing*, one will struggle, one will become, and one will occupy new territories of life and existence. For just as struggles in the streets confront the limits of physical movement, struggles in thought confront the limits of what one can conceive, not only regarding what one is or is not *allowed* to think, but also what one *can* think provided one's available archives of rhetorics and the truth-regimes that condition/control them.



Fig. 2. Occupy Wall Street Activist Chants while Marching.

Thus, to take Occupy as an example one last time, when it comes to knowing what *will have been remembered* regarding it (or any movement, for that matter) *in the future*, it is simply impossible to say, and this is a fact worth celebrating because it keeps

the “potential” of any such movement forever *open*, just as the future itself never stops unfolding. Perhaps, as Sarah van Gelder explains, “[h]istorians may look back at September 2011 as the time when the 99% awoke, named our crisis, and faced the reality that none of our leaders are going to solve it. . . . the moment when we realized we would have to act for ourselves” (3). Perhaps. For as Howard Zinn once predicted, “[t]here is a chance that such a movement could succeed in doing what the system itself has never done—bring about great change with little violence” (425). But this, too, remains impossible to say, even as one conjectures as to what might bring about such a massive transmutation of subjectivity and mobilization of singularities.

However, although the catalysts for change remain uncertain, I have already highlighted the importance of “forgetting” and “beginning again” in connection with radical socio-political transformation, and to this one can add the energizing memory of specific successes, lessons, and victories—events that give birth to *hope*. For example, as Occupier Kevin Zeese avers regarding the movement:

We impacted the debate. We impacted policy. We showed people they are not alone. We exposed the unfair economy and our dysfunctional government. We showed people they could have an impact. We showed people they could have power. We let the genie out of the bottle. No one will put it back in. (Hedges N.p.)

Indeed, generalizations like these and the memories they encompass possess an incredible rhetorical and mobilizing force, and so they are worth recalling and deploying as a movement undulates forward. But on the other hand, there are potential dangers in

remembering a movement too well, that is, in “pitching a tent” in celebration of memory. For as Žižek points out, it is important that one respond to future socio-economic crises⁷⁸ and future instances of state-sanctioned repression with determination, courage, and patience rather than nostalgia for what has already been accomplished. Žižek thus contends: “[t]he only thing I’m afraid of is that we will someday just go home and then we will meet once a year, drinking beer and nostalgically remembering ‘what a nice time we had here.’ Promise yourselves that this will not be the case” (*Occupy!* 69). In order that social movements (whether Occupy or others) might continue to “succeed” and flourish,⁷⁹ then, in order to keep *hope* alive, a specific admixture of memory and forgetting will have been necessary, and as I have shown, the tension between these forces is not one that can be non-violently foreclosed.

Furthermore, just when one thinks it safe to “forget” about a movement (or any monumental event), or when one believes one has the memory of a movement/event well-established, one should expect to see *ghosts*, and the reemergence of forces thought

⁷⁸ Whereas the market crash that produced the Great Depression was swiftly met with some beneficial reforms (such as the Glass-Steagall Act), similar measures have, by and large, not been successfully enacted in the wake of the current neoliberal-capitalist economic crisis. One need only consider the way that the “Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act” or the “Affordable Health Care Act” were eviscerated to safely predict that more crises are on their way.

⁷⁹ It is worth noting that, historically, class struggles tend to ebb and flow in terms of their size, force, and cultural visibility, so one can predict that the “becoming” of Occupy and other movements will follow a similar trajectory, exhibiting moments of higher visibility and impact at some times than at others.

long dead. For example, just as the “death of Occupy” has been proclaimed in many quarters along with any challenge that the movement might issue to hegemonic agendas, perhaps corporate and military elites will deem it “safe” to once again enact economic austerity measures, or send US troops abroad on another imperial adventure for economic and political gain. However, maybe just when US social programs are led to the chopping block or the clamor of sabers again becomes a din, those who have been brought together by Occupy networks may rise up to resist these forces, standing firm against the injustices of austerity and horrors of war as did activists and veterans at Occupy NATO protests in Chicago, an event where soldiers tore medals from their chests and announced furiously that those who gave them such hollow *souvenirs* could have them back:



Fig. 3. Former Sergeant Ash Woolsen Tears Military Medals from his Chest.

But regardless of whatever future forms, whatever mode of “being-against,” that Occupy and other movements for socio-political change take in the future, given

everything they have already brought about through the never-ending cycle of struggle, they leave behind the memory, the trace, of battles fought and won. They rhetorically inscribe in those who live on in their wake hope in and desire for the future. They remind one that the arc of memory bends toward tomorrow, often better tomorrows, curving beyond an unforeseeable horizon, so even if one's palace lies in ruins, the sun will rise again, and light the way along a brand new path of life.

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